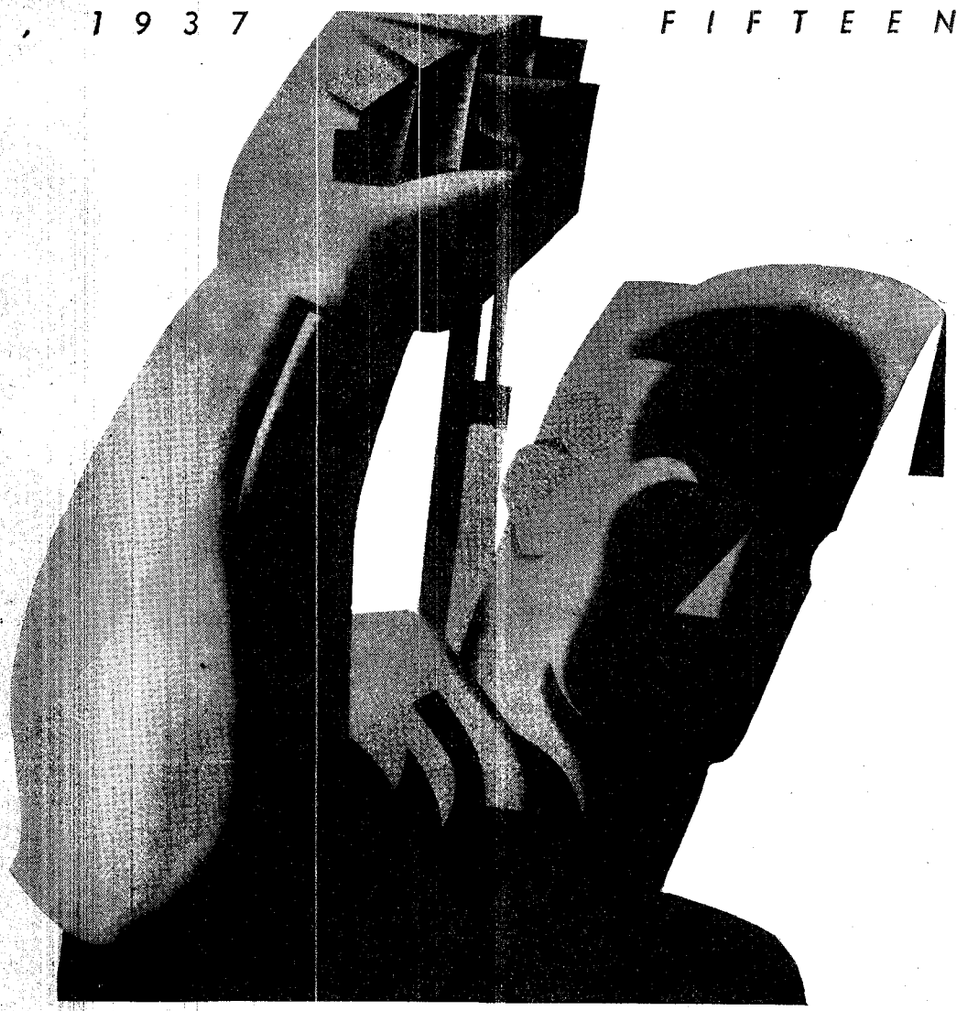
LASKI and WILLIAM GALLACHER

International Symposium on the People's Front

NEW MASSES

APRIL 13, 1937 FIFTEEN CENTS



"Hello America, This Is Madrid Speaking"

THE STORY OF STATION EAQ

By Herbert Kline

What We Can Do, We Must Do Now!

By Robert Forsythe

The First of Three Essays on the Novel

By Ralph Fox

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THIS story has only one thing in common with the smoking-room yarns about girls who go for auto rides: the chief character gets out and walks home. Artist Abe Ajay tells it on himself. Abe is one of the NEW MASSES stalwarts in Altoona, Pa., where, when he gets time, what with making a living and all, he goes out into the countryside to sketch. One fine day not long ago, as he was planted beside a highway catching on his sketch-pad the look of early spring round about Altoona, a car pulled up, and, as they will do, its driver got out and began to rubber at Ajay's work. "What's that?" he queried, pointing to one of Abe's curlycues. Abe told him. "Hmph," was the reply. By this time Ajay had recognized his interlocutor as the head of the local Chamber of Commerce. Mr. Rubberneck—we'll call him that, since we've forgotten his name—went on talking, but got onto what he thought was firmer footing than æsthetics. "What I don't understand," he complained, "is why so many artists are dissatisfied with things in America. Why don't they go——" At this point Ajay began to enlighten his visitor about why so many artists, etc. He should have known better, perhaps, but he did it just the same. The Chamber of Commerce guy came back strong. It became obvious that there would be no more sketching that day. Ajay folded up his kit. Mr. Rubberneck, scenting an attempt to escape, asked Ajay if he couldn't drive him home. Abe said okay, and off they went, the words still flying. "I says to him, and he says to me," is the way Ajay puts it, "until I couldn't take it any more. Finally I said, 'Mister, you better stop right here and let me out.' I walked home." Ajay says he's coming to New York to live.

Perhaps there's something steadfast as the polestar about us; we don't know. At any rate, the gentlemen who go nosing around in the Arctic Circle seem to be, on the whole, friendly to us. There's Rockwell Kent, of course, and we've been told Vilhjalmur Stefansson would probably nod to us on the street. Our newest partisan among the arctic explorers is Peter Freuchen, author of *Eskimo* and other works. Freuchen has written two articles for us, one of which we will publish next week. This is a story telling why he is going to the Soviet arctic this summer. The second piece will be called "An Explorer Explores Germany," and will tell of Freu-

chen's experiences in darkest Naziland.

Next week's articles in our people's-front series will be by Ramon Sender, on the Frente Popular in Spain, and by General Hu Crow-yuan, political commissar of the famous Chinese 19th Route Army, on the national-unity movement among his 400 million fellow-Chinese. Other forthcoming articles worth watching for (or, for that matter, worth subscribing for) are C. Day Lewis's "Aldous Huxley and World Peace" and Joshua Kunitz's "Soviet Intelligentsia."

BETWEEN OURSELVES

Who's Who

HAROLD J. LASKI, author of *The State in Theory and Practice* and other volumes on political theory, is professor of political science at the London School of Economics. At present he is in this country giving a series of lectures at Princeton University. The evening of April 19, the day before he is scheduled to return to England, he will speak under NEW MASSES auspices on "The Future of Western Democracy" at the Master's Institute Hall, in the Roerich Museum, Riverside Drive and 103rd Street, New York. See advertisement on page 29 for further details. . . . William Gallacher is the sole Communist member of the British Parliament. His autobiography, *Revolt on the Clyde,* was recently published. . . . Herbert Kline, former editor of *New Theatre,* is our Madrid correspondent. As previously noted, Correspondent James Hawthorne is now stationed in Valencia. . . . Stanley Milliken is a newcomer among NEW MASSES contributors who has spent considerable time among southern sharecroppers. . . . Richard Wright is a young Chicago Negro poet whose short story in the *New American Caravan* has been singled out for special praise by a majority of reviewers. He has contributed frequently to our pages. . . . Henry Hart has just returned from Spain. . . . Charles Recht is a well-known New York lawyer. . . . Ralph Fox, author of *Lenin* and *Genghis Khan,* was killed on January 3, while in action with the Spanish government troops on the Cordova front. He was born in Halifax, England, in 1900, and saw service in the British Army in the last days of the World War. His essays will continue in coming issues. They are part of a volume, *The Novel and the People,* soon to be issued by International Publishers. The painting by Anton Refregier reproduced on page 15 is in the exhibit *The Social Scene,* on view at the American Artists' School in New York City. . . . Goñi's cover design this week is from a poster issued by the United Socialist Party of Catalonia. . . . William Sanderson's cartoon on page 12, in which he did his best to reproduce the bad taste (to put it mildly) of Nazi culture, is one of a series.

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What's What

TWO memorial events in honor of Americans killed fighting for the cause of Spanish democracy are scheduled to be held in New York this weekend. The first is to commemorate John Lenthier, New Theatre League actor who died recently on the Jarama front. It will be a special performance of John Wexley's *Steel,* at the Labor Stage studios, 106 West 39th Street, at 2:30 p.m., Saturday, April 10. The second is the art auction mentioned last week to commemorate Ben Leider, newspaperman-aviator, which the Brooklyn Heights branch of the American League Against War and Fascism will hold at the Hotel Touraine, Sunday afternoon, April 11, beginning at 2 p.m. The proceeds from both affairs will go to aid Spanish democracy.

Another event for the benefit of the Spanish loyalists will be a children's performance of Remo Bufano's marionettes in *Alice in Wonderland,* at 3 p.m., Saturday, April 10, at the American Women's Association Clubhouse, 353 West 57th Street, New York. A second performance, for adults, featuring the satiric episodes from the Carroll classic, will take place at the Labor Stage studios in New York, Wednesday, April 14, at 8:30 p.m., and will be followed by dancing and refreshments. These two performances are for the benefit of the Medical Bureau to Aid Spanish Democracy, with offices at 151 West 40th St., N. Y.

Contributor Harry Gottlieb is having a one-man show of his paintings at the A.C.A. Gallery in New York which will continue through April 17. And Art Young is among the sponsors of the Cartoonists' Guild first-anniversary ball which will take place Friday, April 9, at Webster Hall in New York.

Flashbacks

"PRACTICALLY the entire European strength of the American Red Cross is being mobilized for a campaign against Bolshevism in the Balkans and parts of Russia," read the New York *Times,* April 9, 1919.

"This action has been ordered by the Red Cross headquarters at Washington, following a direct request from

the American government." The same dispatch explained the "reasons why the American Red Cross is the only organization which can succesfully and without complications carry on this work. In the first place, it is not hampered by the many diplomatic restrictions under which government commissions have to labor. Second, the Red Cross is not answerable to Congress for either its policies or its detailed operations. The result, at least so far as past experience is concerned, has shown that it is the most useful agency existing today for dealing with the difficult and delicate question of civilian morale. . . ."

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NEW MASSES
APRIL 13, 1937

Lithograph by James Boswell

THE PEOPLE'S FRONT IN GREAT BRITAIN

Labor-Communist Unity First

A leading British political scientist sees this as the necessary initial step

By Harold J. Laski

IN my judgment, the idea of a popular front for Great Britain is premature at the present time. It represents a possible later stage in a political evolution of which the earlier stage ought, for the present, to be that upon which the attention of socialists is concentrated.

I agree that a concentration of the progressive tones in Great Britain is desirable if the present National government is to be driven from office in the near future. I agree, also, that a victory at the next general election by the Labor Party alone is in a high degree unlikely. From these premises, it seems a simple step to argue that an agreed program between Labor, the Communists, and the Opposition Liberals is the way to achieve that end.

But I believe that such negotiations would be undesirable unless they were just preceded by the achievement of unity between the Labor and the Communist Parties. Without that unity, I believe that the agreed program would be one which neither the left Socialists in the Labor Party nor the Communists could support. The prerequisite of a popular front, in short, is the ability of the Labor Party to insist on definite and decisive socialist measures being a part of any program put forward. I have been reluctantly driven to the conclusion that without Labor-Communist unity, those measures would not be demanded by the Labor Party. If negotiations were undertaken, therefore, while it is possible that Liberal-Labor agreement might be reached, socialist measures would have no place in that agreement. The Communists would be unable to approve the results; and if the agreement resulted in an electoral victory, it would be no more than temporary triumph for social reform. In the period of declining capitalism, I do not believe that a social reform government can be successful. I think it is essential to make a drastic move towards socialization; and I am convinced that the Liberals would offer in exchange for that necessity a body of ameliorative measures which, while they might be attractive to the trade-union leaders, would have no significance from a socialist standpoint.

THIS position would not obtain if Labor-Communist unity preceded any discussion with the Liberals. It would assure us on the left that the nationalization of the banks and the mines, to take two pivotal measures only, was a condition precedent to any coöperation. On the international side, it would assure those joint defensive arrangements with France and the Soviet Union which are, I think, essential to any policy which proposes to deal firmly with fascism on its international side. Without this unity, the present leaders of the

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...or Party would probably accept a pale League" policy which, to take one example only, might easily seek to evade the grave issues raised by the Spanish civil war. It is urgent for Americans to realize that the one thing we have to avoid in England is a government capable, like the Labor government of 1929, only of quarter-measures. That would lead straight to another 1931; and another 1931 means a fascist government in this country.

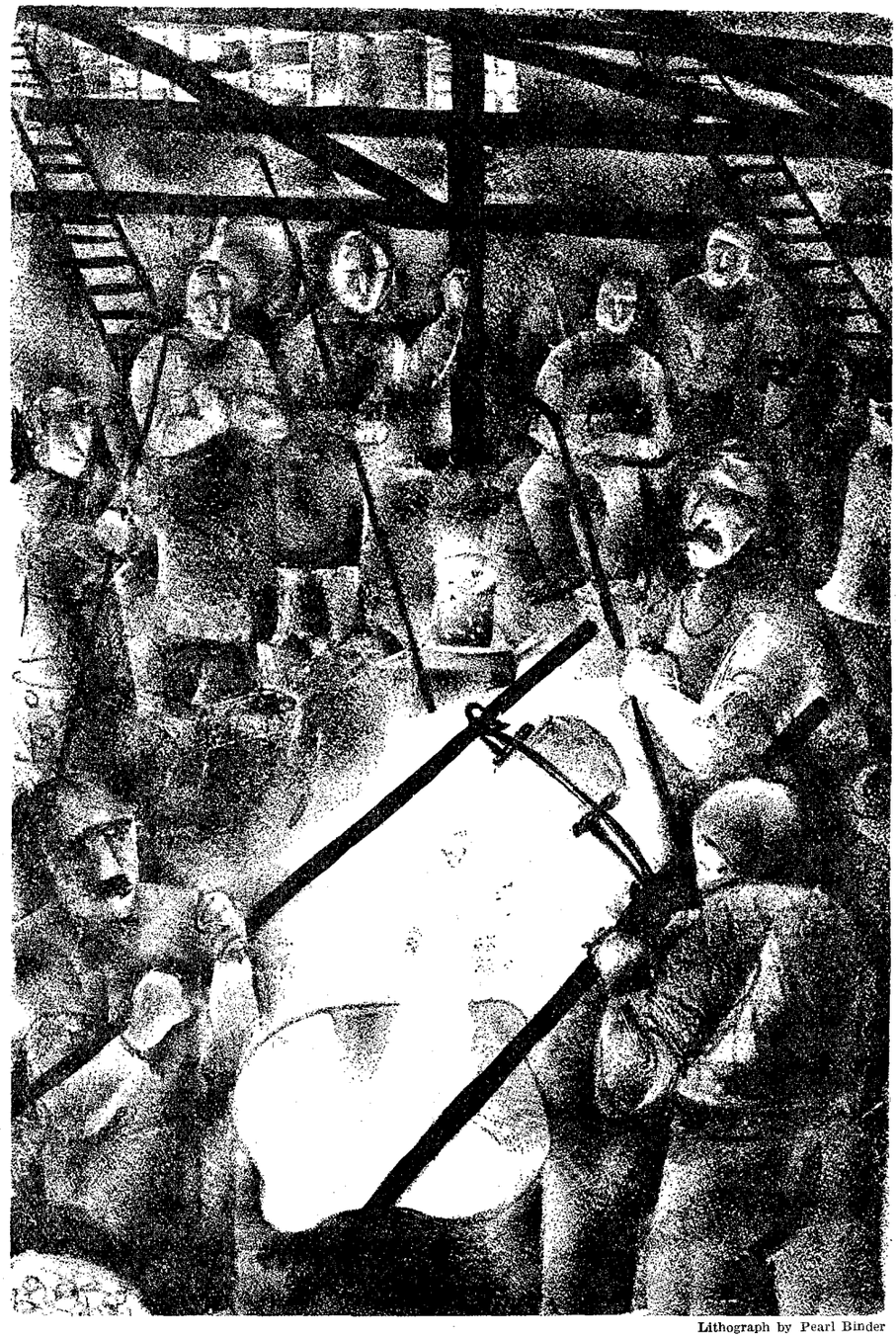
IN MY judgment, that is to say, a popular front is only likely to be successful when the major parties to its making are informed by Marxist ideas. The present direction of the Labor Party is not so informed. It will only gain that complexion as working-class unity is achieved. Without it, the temptation will be to look for popular measures of immediate amelioration which do not tackle the real problems of the capitalist state. The Liberal Party might well accept such measures; with good reason, since on that basis, the tail will have swallowed the dog.

I am not, either, convinced of two things. (1) I doubt whether the Liberal leaders are prepared to accept the only kind of popular front a self-respecting socialist party could accept. They are imperialist—witness the fact that they were the main architects of the new government-of-India act. They are opposed to nationalization of the banks and the mines. They were parties to Sir John Simon's surrender to Japan over Manchukuo. And if they came into an agreement, (2) I doubt seriously whether their voters would follow them. British Liberals are mostly strongly *laissez-faire*. Among the middle-class voters, they are bankers, manufacturers, nonconformist business men with a traditional hostility to state action; among the working-class, they are mostly the older craftsman-trade-unionist who remembers Mr. Gladstone enthusiastically and remembers little else. No alliance with them would be satisfactory unless the policy on which it was based was definitely socialist in principle. I doubt whether most of them could be brought to support such a policy.

Granted Labor-Communist unity, I would be prepared to make the offer of coöperation in a people's front. I agree that in our present critical international position it is worth sacrificing a good deal to get possession of the machinery of government. But if the Liberals would not come into such an arrangement, I still think that Labor-Communist unity would transform the British political situation. For (a) British public opinion is progressive. It is tired of the reactionary Baldwin government, especially in matters of foreign policy. But (b) it does not yet trust the Labor Party. It is not sure, rightly enough, either of the clarity or the courage of its direction. Labor-Communist unity, on the basis of a definite program for a five-year period, would, I believe, make a wide appeal, especially to the voters of the younger generation. It would mean a program based on a clear diagnosis of the present position, domestic and international. It would give the assurance of courage—especially in the international field. It would convince them that a government of this sort would cut through the tangle of privileged interests of which each previous Labor government has been so afraid. I believe that it could attach to itself a large number of those who are at present indifferent to all parties because they see no signs of willingness in any of them to depart, as it has become urgent to depart, from the traditional ways.

It may well be that it is already too late. Before the idea of either working-class unity or the popular front can achieve fruition, we may find ourselves already involved in war. What, then, is the duty of socialists? Unless Great Britain, in such a war, is definitely engaged in the overthrow of fascism, I can see no other path for a socialist than to seek by all means to overthrow the government. If, on the other hand, it enters the war against the fascist powers, socialists should, I think, support it for that objective, retaining complete freedom from all commitments to it. In any event, the first necessity of the present situation is working-class unity. Without it, no working-class party can seriously take the offensive. Not to take the offensive in this period of crisis is to leave the parties of capitalism in possession of the field.

[A 13-point united front was formed on January 18 by the Communist Party, Socialist League, and Independent Labor Party. The Labor Party Executive expelled the Socialist League ten days later. Members of the Socialist League remain as private members of the Labor Party. A campaign is now in full swing for the reaffiliation of the Socialist League to the Labor Party.—THE EDITORS.]



Lithograph by Pearl Binder

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THE PEOPLE'S FRONT IN GREAT BRITAIN

We Are Forging Unity

The Scottish Communist member of Parliament says the reactionary death-grip on labor must be broken, and that progress is being made

By William Gallacher

THE rise of the Popular Front in France, its great election victory and the setback of fascism which accompanied it, had a very far-reaching effect in the British working-class movement, as well as among certain sections of the Liberal Party.

This was strengthened when, as a result of a rapid development of unity in Spain, an election victory was won there also. In the ranks of the Labor Party there was a strong feeling that what had been achieved in France and Spain could be achieved also in Britain.

Even some of the Labor leaders were showing signs of sympathizing with the idea. So much so, that in June of last year Mr. C. R. Attlee, the leader of the parliamentary Labor Party, writing in the *Daily Herald,* saw the possibility of progressive forces coming together on some limited and specified issues.

But the more hard-baked leaders of the Labor Party, such as Herbert Morrison and Bevin (Ernest Bevin, trade union leader, not to be confused with Aneurin Bevin, M. P.) realized the danger of a popular front. They realized from the beginning that it represented a sharpening of the struggle against the capitalist class, and they want to avoid that at any cost.

Whatever progress has to be made, they hope to make in such a way as to have no hard feelings on either side. If they are not able to persuade the hard-faced money-grubbers to agree to what they're doing, at any rate they are determined to temper their activities in such a way as will insure toleration. They are not prepared to follow any line of action that would arouse or accentuate class conflict and this, they realized, would be the outcome of a people's front. So despite the fact that *News-Chronicle,* which represents "Liberalism" and may be said to speak for the professional people and the small middle class, came out fairly strong in support of a popular front, including the Communists, the Labor leaders opposed it on the specious ground that association with the Communists would drive away the middle class. They know this wasn't true. They had seen how the middle class in France and Spain had been rallied. In Britain itself, representative professional and middle-class people were openly advocating unity, but they had to have an excuse of some sort. They dare not speak the truth and say they were afraid of the consequences.

Then came the revolt of the fascists in Spain and the life and death struggle which the people of Spain are facing with such splendid heroism. This confirmed the opinions of the reactionary Labor leaders and strengthened their opposition to the popular front which the Communists were so persistently and energetically advocating. So hostile did they become that none of the other leaders of the Labor Party, who had hitherto shown a measure of sympathy for the idea, dared to mention unity or the popular front. At the Labor Party conference held in Edinburgh in October, while a large body of delegates were favorable, the leaders were opposed or—silent.

BUT THIS Edinburgh Conference and the events that have followed it have brought grave disquiet to great numbers of Labor Party workers. The failure of the leaders to strike any clear note on any of the urgent questions that faced that conference, and the almost complete failure to demonstrate any policy independent of or opposed to the government since, have seriously weakened the position of the Labor Party and the prestige of the Labor leaders.

The workers, including some of the best Labor Party organizations, *cry* for unity, and Morrison & Co. answer: "We have unity. The Labor Party, the trade unions, and the coöperatives, these represent unity. What more do you want? These three great movements working together are all the united front that is required." Well, for one thing, they don't work together except in the most shallow and opportunist manner. They don't work together against the capitalist class, however much they may work together to confuse and deceive the masses. At the Edinburgh conference, a memorandum was submitted dealing with the relations that existed between the Coöperative Party and the Labor Party. This memorandum expressed dissatisfaction with the present relations—the Coöperative Party is quite independent, although it runs its candidates as Labor and Coöperative with the endorsement of the Labor Party—and proposed that the Coöperative Party should become affiliated to the Labor Party and subject to its decisions.

A week or two later, the leaders of the coöperative movement met and passed a resolution in which they said if the memorandum represented the intentions of the Labor Party, the coöperative movement would have to consider the questions of independent Cöoperative representation in local and parliamentary elections. So much for the united front of the coöperatives and the Labor Party.

But worse, much worse than this, is the position in regard to rearmament. Bevin and Sir Walter Citrine, representing the powerful trade-union bureaucracy (and it shouldn't be forgotten that the trade unions supply the main financial support of the Labor Party), are insisting that the Labor Party should support the rearmament policy of the national government. Their argument is reminiscent of the Social Democrats in Germany: "Vote for Hindenburg. Hindenburg will save us from Hitler." Bevin and Citrine argue, supply Baldwin with the armaments, then we can demand that he take action against fascist Germany. Baldwin, of all people, is to save us from fascism.

But Attlee, supported by the main body of the parliamentary Labor Party, is strenuously opposed to this proposal, and so a move is afoot to try and remove Attlee as leader of the parliamentary Labor Party and to replace him with Dr. Hugh Dalton, who has shown himself quite subservient to the trade-union bureaucracy and could be relied upon to work for this policy of support for Baldwin. Thus, instead of unity, all the elements of disruption are at work between opposing factions.

ON THE ISSUE of Spain, the attitude of the Labor leaders has been one of consistent shuffling and cowardice. From the first days of "non-intervention," they became weak echoes of the National government spokesmen, vainly seeking to cover up their betrayal of Spain by asking, "What is the Soviet Union doing?" They ran away from the fact that their acquiescence in the National government's policy enabled it to impose this policy on France and through France on the Soviet Union. But when the Soviet Union made its striking declaration on the question of "non-intervention" and intimated that it held itself no longer bound by the "non-intervention" agreement, then they were sent scurrying around in the most amazing and disgraceful fashion, seeking one way or another to avoid being committed to support the heroic Spanish fighters. Incredible as it may seem, Attlee, the leader of the parliamentary Labor Party, and Arthur Greenwood, deputy leader, went rushing off from the Edinburgh Conference to—Downing

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Street to consult with Prime Minister Baldwin and the Foreign Secretary [Anthony Eden] on the new situation that had arisen. But despite all their efforts to avoid it, they were forced, by the surge of feeling that had been aroused in the movement, to withdraw their support for the policy of "non-intervention" and to make a pretense of being in favor of support for the Spanish government. But that it was only a pretense was proven when a short time later, at the beginning of December, a bye-election took place in Greenoch, and instructions, very strict instructions, were given to all speakers, "No mention has to be made of Spain." And during the whole course of the bye-election, no mention was made of Spain from the Labor Party platform. This attitude was further emphasized by an article which appeared at the beginning of the year in the *Daily Herald,* by Dr. Hugh Dalton, M. P., national chairman of the Labor Party, in which he dealt with the immediate policy and tasks of the Labor Party. No mention, not one word, is made of Spain. But this does not mean that the Labor movement throughout the country is ignoring Spain or shirking its responsibilities. Far from it. Throughout the country as a whole, the labor movement gives ready service, and many of the outstanding members of parliament as well as trade-union and coöperative leaders are doing their share in helping forward the Spanish struggle.

But the general position of the labor movement arising out of the opposing factions in the leadership, the shuffling and the cowardice are causing great dissatisfaction and giving rise to various distortions of the people's front. Small groups of dissatisfied labor people, with little or no contact with the masses, are endeavoring to give an artificial stimulus to the people's front. They are working from the top, without having the patience or political understanding to make a firm base on which to build. Thus, we had one such group recently organizing "a great People's Front meeting" in London. They had speakers representing all parties, including a "democratic" conservative member of parliament, who sits as a supporter of the National government. Everything went well at the meeting until G. D. H. Cole, who represented (not officially) labor, made a broadside attack on the National government. Boothby, the "democratic" conservative, got up and protested, then left the platform vowing to have no more to do with the people's front. This and similar distortions can easily do harm and the group responsible for them must be carefully watched. For there can be no people's front, except on the basis of working-class unity. The "united front" of the workers is absolutely essential to the people's front.

This means, however difficult the task may be, winning the Labor Party to the cause of unity. Despite the vicious and oft-times frenzied opposition of the reactionary leaders, this task can be undertaken and carried through.

DAY BY DAY the strength and influence of the Communist Party grows, and all that strength and influence is directed towards unity. Within the labor movement itself, those who are for unity are becoming more and more outspoken. Many of the best workers in the Labor Party recognize that the Edinburgh conference, by its failure to face up to the great issues facing the international working class, represented a terrible set-back to the movement in Britain. These see in the unity of the working class the only hope for any effective advance.

Foremost among these are the members of the Socialist League, whose leader is the very popular Labor member of parliament, Sir Stafford Cripps.

The leaders of the Socialist League, which is affiliated to the Labor Party, have been for some time back in consultation with the leaders of the Communist Party and of the Independent Labor Party in order to try and find a basis of agreement for a joint campaign for working-class unity.

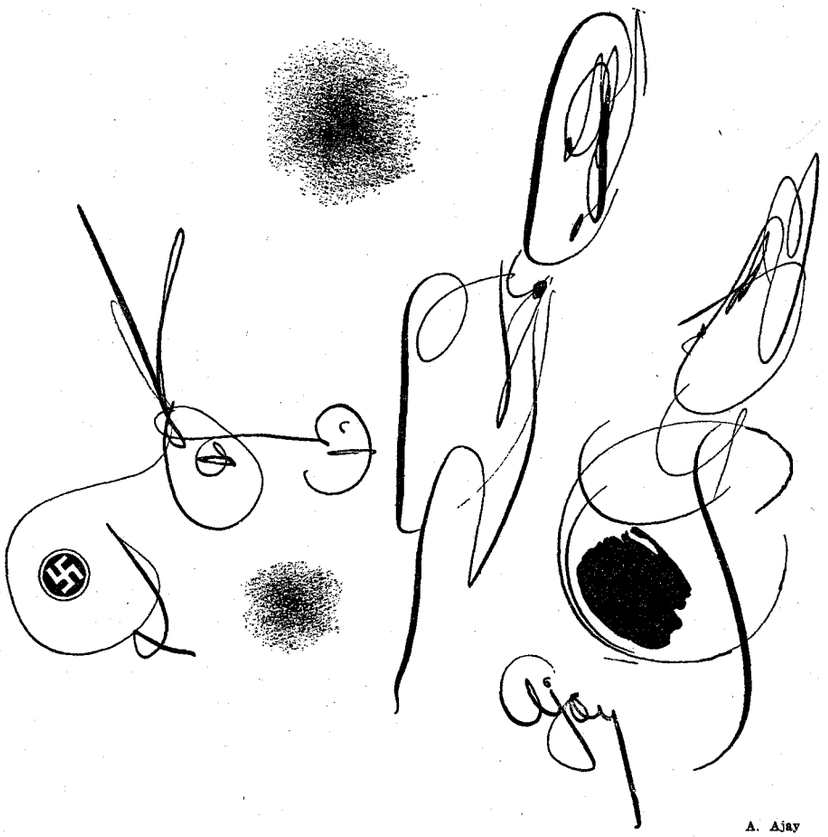
The three parties have succeeded in securing, not without difficulty, this basis of agreement and plan for a nation-wide campaign, with Harry Pollitt (Communist Party), Sir Stafford Cripps, M. P. (Socialist League) and James Maxton, M. P. (I. L. P.) as the central figures.

In the meantime, while this plan is being considered, the Labor Party leaders have, if they persist in the course mapped out, been deliberating over this new development, and it is generally believed that they mean to expel Sir Stafford Cripps and disaffiliate the Socialist League.*

But despite anything they may do, the campaign will go on. It will be a campaign that will arouse the country and give new hope to the working class. In all large countries, demonstrations will be on a scale and of a character never seen before. Local Labor Parties, Trades Councils, and Coöperative Guilds will be brought into the campaign until unity becomes the all-dominating issue in the labor movement. Sooner or later, the resistance of the reactionary leaders will be broken down, their power to prevent the advance of the movement destroyed. Sooner or later, the rising tide of the mass movement will force them to give way for those who are not afraid of the consequences of the class struggle, for those who will lead a real fight against the enemies of the working class.

As we advance in this great task, as we advance towards greater and greater working-class unity, so also will the movement grow in strength. As it grows in strength, it will attract more and more the support of the professional people and the middle class, for it is only the growing strength of the working class that will attract and win them.

Thus, as we move towards working-class unity, so also do we advance towards the realization of the people's front. It can be built, strong and effective, in Britain. It will be built on the firm basis of working-class unity. We are actively engaged in making that basis now.



A. Ajay

"I don't know, but they say its mother was frightened by a Trotskyite."

* The Labor Party Executive has disaffiliated the Socialist League, and has given its members till June 1 to withdraw from the united front or suffer individual expulsion.—THE EDITORS.

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The Voice of Spain

Our correspondent in Madrid is one of those whose words, winging via the short-wave ether, have stirred the world

By Herbert Kline

IN a luxurious room on the third floor of the former Madrid mansion of Duquesa Maria Mitjans, close friend of King Alfonso and a member of the famous Santana family, a young Spaniard, Compañero Fernandez, labors over an intercepted radio dispatch from Burgos, the rebel "capital."

In a few minutes, Compañero Fernandez rushes down to the floor below and hands the decoded message to his superior. A moment later, in the Asturias regions far to the north of Madrid, loyalist receiving stations learn that two fascist warships have been ordered to shell an important munitions factory. Government coast-defense batteries and planes spring into action and ward off the surprise attack. Bitterly needed munitions are saved from the fire of fascist guns; loyal Spanish workers laboring over dangerous explosives are saved from a terrible death. Meanwhile, the miners blasting their way into nearby Oviedo are unaware of the service rendered them by their comrades in the Spanish Radio Telegraph Union in Madrid.

"Hello! Hello! Madrid calling.

"This is Station EAQ, the Voice of Spain."

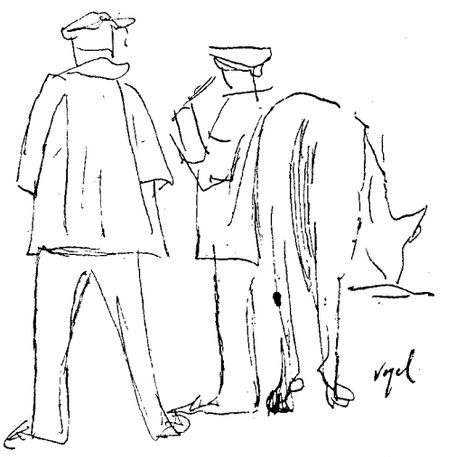
Rafael Alberti, the poet, steps up to the microphone. He recites his poem, "Defensa de Madrid." Listeners are unaware that this revolutionary poet and his wife, Maria Theresa Leon, were stranded in fascist territory at the time of the military uprising. They were forced into hiding, and their only contact with their loyalist comrades was this very Voice of Spain. With the aid of some sympathetic fishermen, Alberti and his wife made a lucky escape. Now his voice calls out in rebel-held territory. Who knows what anti-fascist behind Franco's lines may be thrilled by his words? Alberti reads a poem by Jose Bergamin, a fellow-poet, a fine young Catholic writer who shares with him a common hatred of fascism and a love for Spain. He then reads a poem by an anonymous militiaman who describes the bravery of the Fifth Regiment.

A soldier huddling behind the barricades facing the rebel lines at University City is moved by the poem of his fellow militiaman. He hurries to a nearby telephone and phones Station EAQ. Will Comrade Alberti please repeat the poem? No, *compañero*. It is impossible, for the program must proceed as scheduled. A German, an Italian, and a Moorish captive are waiting to speak to their fellow-countrymen in Franco's lines.

As the disappointed soldier returns to his post he sees behind a heavy stone barricade, one hundred yards from the fascist trenches, a car equipped with a huge loud speaker. This is Altavoz del Frente, a special division of radio propaganda work. The strange Moorish tongue has already replaced Alberti's fiery Spanish. Across no-man's land, unseen Moors listen in wonder to their fellow-tribesmen's report of how they have been deceived by their officers. How does his voice carry so far with such force? Maybe they are holding a revolver to his head to make him talk? Perhaps the money paid them *is* really worthless? Perhaps the generals *have* deceived them with their promises of independence for Morocco? Perhaps . . .?

Moors, Germans, Italians, listen in turn to appeals from their countrymen to desert their leaders and join the government cause. Some are angered by the radio appeals. They shout derisive replies at the loyalists. The cross winds sweeping between the two armies carry off their words. They curse and jeer anyway. A German sets off a heavy mortar. The shell speeds off on an errand of death. It shoots high into the soft, luminous Spanish night. High, higher, to a great height, and then it darts down toward the lines of men who are appealing to their enemies to join their cause for brotherhood and freedom. But the shell does not strike its mark. It falls short.

Late that night, the German gunner who set off the mortar to deceive his officer is among the five deserters who respond to the radio appeal. He says he would like to join the Thaelmann Brigade. He was once a marine worker in Hamburg, the port where Ernst Thaelmann worked as a longshoreman and became a working-class leader. The Moors ask for the fellow-tribesman who spoke to them. It is difficult to make them understand that he spoke to them from a radio station two miles from the front. They are suspicious of a trap. Not until they are brought to their tribesman at the quarters of the Radio Syndicate do their suspicions vanish.



J. Vogel

"LISTEN, SPAIN! Listen, World! This is Madrid calling—this is Station EAQ—the Voice of Spain. You will now hear the official news report of the Madrid Defense Junta. Today, on the Jarama Front, which, in the last ten days, has been the scene of the fiercest fighting of the war, the loyalist troops stopped the fascist offensive well short of the Valencia road and later counter-attacked and advanced half a kilometer.

"Listen, you soldiers at University City, you miners dynamiting your way into Oviedo, you Scotsmen, Americans, Frenchmen, Germans, Czechs, English, Italians, Bulgarians, Swedes, and Irish, you whose brothers, sons, husbands are fighting along with their Spanish *compañeros* in the people's army of the Spanish republic, as their heroic compatriots, LaFayette, Garibaldi, Byron, and John Reed, fought for freedom in the past. . . . Listen, you striking auto workers in Detroit, you men of the Red Putilov works in Leningrad, you comrades in the underground movement in Berlin, you nurses broken-hearted over our wounded from the Jarama front, you youngsters collecting aid for Spain on the streets of democratic countries whose statesmen have betrayed the Spanish people with their "non-intervention" screen for fascist intervention. . . .

"Listen! Franco's latest attempt to cut Madrid's communications has failed. The Moors, Germans, and Italians have been driven back and have left seven hundred dead on the battlefield today. The Madrid Defense Junta reports. . . .

"This is Madrid calling—Station EAQ—the Voice of Spain. . . ."

The Spanish news is repeated in English, German, French, and Portuguese, and in the following days, the voice of the Spanish people, *"No Pasaran!"* is acknowledged in letters from Peter Gourlay of Rosyth, Scotland; from Madelaine Quarrelli of Fort du France, Martinique; from an anonymous Lisbon revolutionary; and from Frank L. Dodge, R. F. D. 1, Mechanicsburg, Pa., United States of America.

THE HUNDREDS of dramatic incidents occurring in radio work in Spain are hardly more interesting than the account of how the radio service came into the control of the government.

Before the uprising of fascists in July there

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were only three official broadcasting stations in Madrid: Station EAQ, financed by the International Broadcasting Co. of London, and two Spanish-owned stations, the Radio España and Union Radio. Station EAQ's revenue included income from commercial programs, but derived primarily from its radiogram service. The two other companies existed on their revenue from Spanish and foreign commercial programs.

The radio was never used for propaganda in Spain except for a short period prior to the 1936 February elections, which placed the Popular Front government in power. Political propaganda over the radio was introduced by the parties of the Right. The Left and republican organizations were quick to follow. Statistics compiled in 1931 revealed that there were over four hundred thousand licensed receiving sets in Spain. Today's estimates vary from eight hundred thousand to one million.

With the outbreak of the rebellion, it was necessary for the government to control the radio. This was not achieved through violence or expropriation. The radio companies voluntarily placed themselves at the disposal of the government. In order to guarantee the functioning of the radio service, workmen formed control committees. The regular director of Union Radio, Señor Urguita, was invited to take part in the meetings of the workers' control committees, and he is participating to this day. As the EAQ was a foreign company, the government intervened directly and, with the complete agreement of the company, appointed an official arbitrator. Radio España, like Union Radio, is under the control of the workers' committees. The entire radio service is supervised by the Syndicate of Wireless Telegraphy, affiliated with the General Workers' Union (U.G.T.).

The three original stations have not only maintained complete services, but have greatly improved their services during the six months of civil war. The radio workers have aided the government cause immeasurably by setting up twelve additional stations in Madrid. Technicians from the Syndicate of Wireless Telegraphy have built over seventy additional stations in a carefully planned network which operates in close contact with the various fronts, with the airplane and naval units, and with the Ministry of Propaganda. At many strategic points, transmitting stations have been installed in case telephone communications break down.

The main functions of radio work in Spain today are: (1) to perform the services related to the war ministry; (2) to spread educational propaganda, which includes music and other entertainment, war news, etc.; (3) to inform the Spanish people about the international situation, in which Spain's fate is involved; (4) to aid in emergencies, that is, to provide advice on evacuation, health, etc.; (5) to interfere with fascist propaganda from Burgos and other centers, and to counter it with government propaganda; (6) to broadcast to foreign countries an honest interpretation of the Spanish issues brought to a climax in the civil war by the fascist rebellion in July, 1936.

The latter, including the official war news, should be of primary interest to Americans. Broadcasts in English from Madrid are conducted regularly over station EAQ (30.4 millimeters or 9.4 megacycles, short wave). Stephen Spender, English poet; Jean Watts and Ted Allan, Canadians; and the writer participate regularly in these broadcasts. After a number of experiments, radio connections with America have been established, and the reception at points as far apart as Canada, the Gulf of Mexico, and the state of Kansas is reported as excellent.

The Voice of Spain can now be heard in the land of the farmers and mechanics whose ancestors at Valley Forge and Long Island welcomed the aid of foreign democrats. It is heard in the land of Wat Tyler and Milton, in the land of Robespierre and the Paris Commune, in the homeland of Karl Liebknecht and Heine, and the land of Garibaldi's red shirts. It is heard on the battlefield where opposing world forces, democracy and fascism, are locked in combat. Invisible, unharmed by machine guns and the explosive might of artillery, the Voice of Spain invades the camp of the enemy, penetrates to the minds and hearts of the enemy's soldiers, numbs the hands at the guns and the cannon, and wins recruits to the cause of liberty. The loud-speaker spreads the call of democracy over the battlefront. It is a weapon that strikes doubt and despair in the hearts of the mercenaries of the fasces and swastika. It is a new kind of warfare. It is a civilized, twentieth-century weapon in a warfare against barbarism. To the peasant and worker of Italy in soldier's uniform, to the unemployed machinist in the Nazi battalions, the Voice of Spain speaks of bread and peace and freedom, and turns them against their employers and generals. It is an instrument more terrible and effective than any yet devised in modern warfare because it is an instrument of truth, and the Voice of Spain is spreading that truth over the world.

Letting the Cat Out of Papa's Bag

THE BLACK STAR PUBLISHING CO., a literary agency, has been submitting to various publications an article on the Moscow trials by Trotsky's son Sedov. Here are some interesting statements which Sedov makes. The italics are ours:

> The real reason for the trials was the large increase of Trotskyist activity in Russia. . . . A new revolution in Russia cannot be prevented. New leaders, unknown to the G.P.U., are secretly at work, and their work is succeeding more and more every day. . . . All Stalin's frantic measures cannot stop the New Revolution. *It will not be a Socialist revolution, but purely political.* With Stalin in power this cannot be achieved by legal or constitutional means. *It can only be achieved by force.* That does not mean armed revolution, but a stern and solid resistance on the part of the masses—the workers who are imposed upon.

Sedov has let the cat out of papa's bag; he admits that Trotsky wants a revolution by force which will not be a Socialist revolution. Sincere and intelligent liberals have begun to realize this, and many of them have resigned from the Committee for the Defense of Leon Trotsky. More and more that committee emerges as an organization to *whitewash Leon Trotsky.* Evidence of this was recently presented by Mauritz Hallgren at a public meeting in Mecca Temple.

"Several weeks ago," he related, "I proposed to thirty-eight members of the committee, persons I supposed were the liberal members of the committee, that they divorce themselves from the political members of the committee, set themselves up as a truly liberal and impartial body not to conduct an investigation into the Moscow trials but to give Trotsky an opportunity to present his evidence. How many members of this committee could be obtained for a purely liberal impartial committee? . . . *Not one!*"

Since Mr. Hallgren made this significant revelation, the defense committee has further exposed its real character. It has sent a group headed by John Dewey and Arthur Garfield Hays to Mexico to give Trotsky a "hearing." To the Mexican correspondent of the New York *Times,* Albert Goldman, leading Trotskyist politician of Chicago, made some important admissions. He admitted, first, that the "impartial" commission will hear only Trotsky's side of the case. Then he admitted that the "impartial" commission is favorably disposed to Trotsky. "These men," Mr. Goldman said, "do not accept the charges against Mr. Trotsky." From these statements, the *Times* correspondent quite logically concluded "that this trial is likely to be a publicity campaign with only one outcome—the whitewashing of Mr. Trotsky."

The committee which is organizing this whitewash is precisely what it calls itself: a committee for the *defense* of Leon Trotsky. Others less partisan will realize that Sedov's admissions document the defense admissions in the Moscow trials.

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Covering the News

Covering the events of the week ending April 5

WITH the country awaiting the Court's pleasure concerning the Wagner act, the President's program for judiciary reform took a back seat during the week. Supplanting it for the time was a sudden upsurge in Congress of reactionary opposition to the sit-down strike.

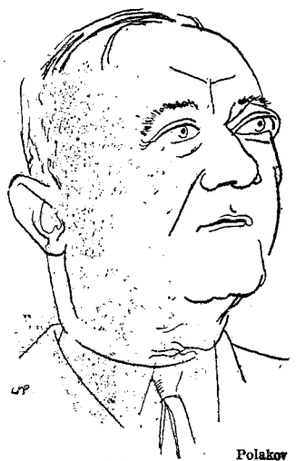
In the Senate, the long-brewing storm broke when Byrnes (D., S. C.) rose to offer an amendment to the Guffey-Vinson bill for regulating interstate commerce in bituminous coal. The amendment, admittedly intended as "a condemnation of sit-down strikes," technically confined itself to the coal industry in order to be germane, but its author left no doubt that if passed, it would stand as a "declaration of public policy" against all sit-down strikes. The immediate effect of the proposal was to stun administration leaders, who, whatever their feeling about the sit-downs, had no desire to force the President to commit himself at this time. In reply to their insistence that the rider discriminated against coal miners, Byrnes later changed his amendment to a statement of policy concerning the sit-down in general. Faced with the issue on these terms, administration forces in the Senate, with the aid of all progressives in the chamber, defeated the Byrnes rider 48 to 36. Passage of the Guffey-Vinson bill itself followed.

Not so squeamish about the powers back home was New York's Senator Wagner, who from the start attributed the strikes to "the greed of monopoly capital." Attacking the giant corporations which have consistently ignored or violated the labor relations act, Wagner accused their directors of having "openly banded together to defy this law of Congress," and held them fully responsible for the wave of sit-downs that followed. "The organized and calculated and cold-blooded sit-down against federal law," he declared, "has come, as always, not from the common people, but from a few great vested interests. The uprising of the common people has come, as always, only because of a break-down in the ability of the law and our economic system to protect their rights."

Even more vicious than the proposed Byrnes amendment was the resolution offered in the House of Representatives by Representative Dies (D., Tex.) and favorably reported by the House Rules Committee. The Dies proposal calls for the first major investigation of organized labor in the history of the United States. Inasmuch as its author had also introduced a bill to outlaw the sit-down, there was not much doubt, to quote Representative Coffee (D., Wash.) that the proposed investigation "would provide the means for a virtual witch hunt into unions and union affairs and would be used as a weapon for the reactionaries against the labor movement."

BEHIND the almost unprecedented haste with which the Rules Committee reported the Dies resolution was the fear, privately expressed by one congressman, that unless Congress acts now, the sit-down "will eventually become legal through evolution of ideas, as in the case of strikes themselves and picketing." But there were equally strong fears of what the Dies investigation would accomplish, and congressional progressives lost no time in launching their attack. "The attitude and animus of the author," said Representative Scott (D., Cal.) of Mr. Dies, "as clearly expressed on the floor, and the very wording of the resolution indicate that it will not be used to determine through an impartial finding of facts the causes and conditions which lead up to and compel the sit-down. It will be used by the reactionaries for the purpose of conducting a fishing expedition into union affairs. . . . This Dies resolution will be used by Hearst in his campaign against the trade unions and the democratic rights of the people."

WHILE Congress battled over the sit-down strike, workers throughout the nation's industries continued to make use of this effective method: new sit-downs occurred in the Flint Chevrolet plants of General Motors and in the Kansas City plant of Ford. The latter was the first sit-down in a Ford-owned assembly plant. In Lansing, to which C.I.O. chief John L. Lewis returned after a sojourn in New York which resulted in a new contract and wage rise for 400,000 coal miners, negotiations were still in progress. Representatives of the Chrysler Corp., with Walter P. Chrysler at their head, sat at the same table with Lewis and other union leaders, and Governor Murphy; and reports from the closed conference room indicated that the possibilities for a successful strike settlement were strong. With the victorious conclusion of the meeting with bituminous coal operators behind him (during which an agreement was signed adding almost $100,000,000 yearly to the wages of the miners) Lewis was expected to press more insistently for the most favorable agreement with Chrysler.



Polakov

Wagner—Not so squeamish

Far from the auto strike scene, in the oil fields of Texas, organizers for the Committee for Industrial Organization were preparing to go into action in their drive to unionize the oil fields. In other sections of the country, workers connected with all branches of the oil producing and distributing industry were awaiting the first moves in the campaign to win them over to militant unionism.

Still angered by the continued successes of the C.I.O., which opened not only its oil workers' campaign but also its drive to unionize America's 1,250,000 textile workers, A.F. of L. President William Green delivered himself of another choice bit of union-baiting during the week. Speaking in Newark before the second convention of the National Council of Aluminum Workers, Green likened Lewis to "a Hitler or Mussolini," and charged that the organizational campaigns being pursued by the C.I.O. were "raiding parties." Among the audience were many delegates from locals already affiliated with the C.I.O.

A substantial pay rise, a five-day week, and recognition of the union, the American Newspaper Guild, were demanded by more than sixty editorial employees of the Long Island *Daily Press,* who struck when repeated attempts to have their demands considered were blocked.

Not to be outdone by their brothers in private industry, W.P.A. workers in a score of cities employed the sit-down strike as a means of protest against the announced curtailment of funds for projects. In New York City, W.P.A. workers in all five boroughs were preparing for a city-wide strike against wage cuts and dismissals. Flying automobile squadrons were employed by the project workers to spread the news of their strike call.

In Wilmington, Del., representatives of the truckmen who have been on strike for three weeks were preparing to meet with employers to negotiate the union demands, which include a forty-eight-hour week and a $34 weekly minimum wage. The truckmen's strike had aroused Wilmington labor to the point where the Central Labor Council had threatened a general strike if the truckers' demands were not granted.

WHILE the action of the House Rules Committee on the anti-sit-down resolution had the appearance of being a defeat for President Roosevelt, there was no doubt that the White House met a reverse at the hands of the House Agriculture Committee. Despite the pitiful inadequacy of the President's proposal to provide $50,000,000 a year to enable farmers to buy land for themselves,

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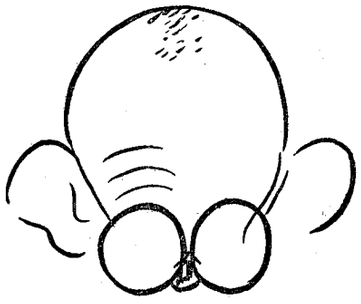
the committee eliminated the section completely from the farm tenancy bill to be presented to the House. In what was regarded as the sharpest rebuff he has yet received in connection with farm legislation, the committee rejected even the President's compromise as having "socialistic tendencies." It was believed that with public pressure the land-purchase clause might be restored on the floor of the House, the committee's recommendation notwithstanding.

Partially offsetting this reactionary move was the first favorable action taken by the House on anti-lynching legislation in fifteen years. The favorable reporting of the Mitchell anti-lynching bill, while surprising, was not altogether heralded with jubilation by progressives, however. Introduced by America's only Negro congressman, the bill is considerably weaker than the Gavagan anti-lynching bill, also scheduled for House debate in the near future. The Gavagan bill has the support of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People, and it was felt by some that the committee was merely trying to split support for the stronger bill.

After five years of pouring federal money into heavy industry in the hope that some of it would trickle down, President Roosevelt appeared to be on the verge of abandoning this approach entirely, of shifting the emphasis to promoting consuming power. Moved by the steady rise of durable goods prices, particularly steel, Roosevelt announced a curtailment of P.W.A. projects, with the hope of lowering the demand for such commodities and thereby the price. Effective demand for consumer goods, on the other hand, was to be stimulated, indicating perhaps an expanded W.P.A. Whether such an expansion was actually contemplated, the President did not say.

LOYALIST troops more than held their own on three fronts and fought a game battle for supremacy on a fourth in a week which continued to give cheer to supporters of democracy. Pressure on Madrid was relieved for the first time in three months as the rebels continued to retreat on the Guadalajara front north of the capital, on the Cordoba front, south of the capital, and on the Asturian front, north of Burgos, rebel capital. Main interest centered on the struggle for Cordoba, where the loyalists seemed about to trap an army of 15,000 Italian "volunteers" by great flanking movements. Insurgents set fire to forests and dynamited bridges to cover their retreat, but to no avail. The front where the issue remained in doubt was the northern Basque country, where insurgents, under General Emilio Mola, gained an early advantage by capturing Mount Pena de Gorbea, overlooking Bilbao. Hastily recruited Basque troops, led in person by President José Antonio de Aguirre, were reported to have regained the mountain in a fierce counter-attack, but the rebel threat was still too ominous for comfort. An interesting development among the Basques, overwhelmingly Catholic in religion, was the dispatch of an official protest to the Vatican against insurgent massacres of Catholic priests. Observers from all camps finally conceded that the loyalists had gained complete mastery in the air, as seen by the terrific damage to insurgent forces, materials, and morale on the Cordoba and other fronts by loyalist air raids. The key Moroccan port of Ceuta suffered heavy losses in a combined air and sea attack, in which the loyalist battleship, *Jaime Primero,* took a prominent part.



Gandhi—Planning a comeback?

Morocco, scene of the outbreak of the Spanish rebellion, also became the scene of the first large-scale rebellion against the rebels. Despite official denials, repeated reports came through of important mutinies in Tetuan, Ceuta, and Algeciras. Italian troops were rushed to patrol the disaffected areas, and summary executions were carried out against officers and men suspected of mutiny. Most observers wondered what Mussolini and Hitler were planning in retaliation for the rebel setbacks in Spain. Partial answer was found in the dispatch of fifty more Italian planes from Milan to rebel territory on March 25. In Catalonia, President Luis Companys temporarily solved a government crisis by himself assuming the premiership in a new cabinet composed of two members each from the Left Republican Party, National Confederation of Labor (Syndicalist), and General Workers' Union (Socialist-Communist leadership).

WITHOUT warning, the Hayashi government, under pressure from army extremists bent on the "great war" against China and the Soviet Union, dissolved the Japanese Diet and ordered new elections for April 30. The Japanese press was scornful of the necessity of the move because the chief government measures, especially the budget, had already been passed, although not without much grumbling, by the deputies. Chuji Machida expressed the prevailing anti-militarist sentiment by charging that the government dissolved the Diet "in order to punish the political parties." Observers expected the new Diet to be more liberal than the last, which led to the interesting speculation that the militarists might resort to repeated dissolutions until they got a parliament to their liking. The chief political by-product of the coming elections was expected to be the emergence of a new fascist party. Indicating that the government would back such a "patriotic" fascist front, Premier Senjuro Hayashi said: "If such a party appears, we will probably be mutually sympathetic. More I cannot say now."

April 1, the date when the New Indian Constitution, tailor-made to fit British imperialist needs, was to go into effect, came and went without the formation of constitutional ministries in at least six of the eleven provinces. Because British-appointed governors would not waive their "constitutional" right to set aside decisions of the provincial ministries, the Indian National Congress decided not to form ministries in those provinces which had returned Congress majorities to the legislatures. Congress leaders carried out a one-day general strike on April 1 despite greatly augmented forces of troops and police, wielding heavy wooden batons. Makeshift ministries were formed in the six provinces which will carry on through the summer under conditions of virtual martial law. Many Congress leaders were arrested for leading demonstrations; foremost among the prisoners was Jayaprokash Narain, president of the Indian Congress Socialist Party. London reports intimated that Mohandas K. Gandhi might attempt a comeback as Britain's front in the present crisis.

SEEMINGLY in confirmation of Marx's saying that history repeats itself, once as a tragedy and then as a farce, the "impartial inquiry" demanded by the American Committee for the Defense of Leon Trotsky got under way under circumstances which a cabled story to the New York *Times,* usually sympathetic to Trotsky, described as "sad news to many who had hoped Mr. Trotsky would be coldly and impartially questioned." The committee, it turned out, was composed of persons all of whom were already on record as supporting Trotsky, including John Dewey, Suzanne La Follette, Benjamin Stolberg, and Carlo Tresca. Albert Goldman, who was going to act as "counsel" for Trotsky, blithely announced that the "investigators" were convinced of Trotsky's innocence prior to their inquiry. Goldman also swept into the discard Trotsky's boast that he would produce his entire correspondence for the investigating committee. Soviet Ambassador Alexander A. Troyanovsky scorned the whole proceedings with the remark: "Practically it means that Trotsky will lead the inquiry about himself and afterward will probably be his own judge with the assistance of his advocates."

After weeks of recurrent idle rumors, mainly from London, some weight was lent in a radio speech by French Under-Secretary of State Francois de Tessan to the report that President Roosevelt intended to propose an international disarmament conference, to be held in Copenhagen this summer. De Tessan implied that the Blum government would welcome such an initiative by President Roosevelt, and pointed to similar action by President Woodrow Wilson during the World War. Secretary of State Cordell Hull, however, tartly told reporters that Norman Davis was not sent to Europe to explore sentiment on the rumored arms parley, despite almost daily intimations from Europe to the contrary.

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What We Can Do, We Must Do Now!

Decisive moments in history come seldom, but when they do, everyone must shoulder the load

By Robert Forsythe

THE human animal, and I think this is especially true since the World War, is inclined to believe that the particular era we are going through is of such importance that history will inevitably include it among the great periods. We are much like the girl in the recent cartoon by Wortman, who yells down to her mother from the sit-down strike: "Mama, we're making history." So I may be wrong in thinking that the Battle of Guadalajara, as part of the great Battle of Madrid, is a turning point in the affairs of mankind. But I find such exaltation, such sacrifice and bravery, in every phase of the defense of Madrid and the world fight against fascism and Reaction, that I am sure this period marks the high point of the fascist aggression. After Guadalajara, the decline of fascism is certain.

As John Strachey has pointed out, the low point in the democratic struggle was reached in Germany when power was surrendered with scarcely a protest. The next great conflict came in Austria, where the workers were defeated, but only after they had fought bitterly, forcing their own leaders into battle and showing the strength of democracy when aroused. Despite such lessons, the republican government of Spain was criminally negligent and short-sighted, believing neither the experiences of Germany or Austria nor their own struggles of the preceding years. They allowed the reactionaries to maintain places of power, gave them freedom to organize revolt under the very eyes of the government, and answered the warnings of the left wing with Azaña's scornful phrase: "The old phonograph record over again."

The story is too recent for repetition, and my point is not that the loyal workers and peasants of Spain have hurled back the mercenary forces of their own reactionary classes, but that they have answered the intervention of Italy and Germany and the hamstringing of France and England with such blows that new faith has come into the world and new hope is making humanity glad.

The effect has been tremendous. Letters arriving now from people who have been in Spain are of such a character that one might believe a new religion had come into the world, as indeed I believe it has.

"You must not be pessimistic," writes one liberal friend. "You must take the long view. We will win in Spain. If we lose now it will be because of English intrigue, not lack of courage—courage the like of which the world has never seen before. Our people are wonderful. There never has been such fighting for an understood and for an actually existing ideal. . . . We have 50,000 French and Germans and Poles and Danes and Belgians—Germans by the hundreds out of concentration camps. And, above all, *one million Spanish volunteers* — poor devils, mostly untrained and without guns, but a million ready to die for the Marxian or the Kropotkin thesis. . . . *They can't kill that!*"

Without knowing my friend personally, it will be impossible to understand the change this letter represents. It is a change which I find in everybody who has come in touch with the courage of Madrid. This may not be something new in history, but it has stimulated a great emotional wave which is turning the world about. There can be no doubt of it, no matter what the outcome in Spain. We are witnessing a transformation of world character which can only mean a transformation of world politics. As well as the next, I realize that there have been similar moments of exaltation and sacrifice in history, but never before has more hung on the spirit of a beleaguered people supported by progressive elements the world over. Guadalajara is a decisive battle of the world; I am convinced of it.*

Sylvia Wald

Air Raid

What it has done to otherwise comfortable individuals may be seen by this bit from the letter of another friend:

> We go back to Spain soon again. I realize that the farm and home and flowers and peace will have to be squeezed in whenever possible, but we have work to do for the rest of our lives. Our tourist days are over as are many other days. History has reached its accelerated period and is moving very fast; you know that as well as I do. Intelligent men have to work fast. . . .

Even more striking is the effect the Spanish revolt has had upon persons hitherto concerned with the minutiæ of political discussion. From a friend who had left for Europe deeply disturbed about the first Moscow trials, I have this letter:

> One must realize what this damnable war is being fought about. . . . It has to be hammered into every stupid liberal, Socialist, Anarchist, Trotskyist head that cheers for democracy and then allows without whimper the atrocities that are going on in Spain. . . . All who have been in Spain and are on our side say "Thank God for Russia." We will all say it for ourselves soon, some day, and with tears in our eyes. They are the firm rock and salvation for the anti-fascists of this world and don't forget it.

It is because of this that I find myself unable to worry about what critics may say of Russia these days. The idea of being upset by E. M. Delafield's views on the Soviet Union is obviously ridiculous. What André Gide writes does not move me, either to protest or anger. What the Trotskyists say is a matter of the utmost unimportance. The great truth of history is that the Soviet Union exists. There it stands, an accomplished fact; with faults, with many things yet to be done; but there it is! It could be a hundred times worse and still I would love it. As the final conflict approaches, it is the place of refuge for all who cherish life. It is the bulwark against degradation, against reversion to savagery and black magic. Would the liberal spirits of the world prefer to leave their fate in the hands of the "democratic" British, that powerful race of peddlers, which was happy enough to

*After this was written, confirmation of this belief came from Ernest Hemingway, who, in a dispatch in the N. Y. *Times*, March 29, said: "Brihuega [Guadalajara] will take its place in military history with the other decisive battles of the world."

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tie the hands of democratic Spain if the conflict could end rapidly with a fascist victory which would leave untouched the imperial interests of Great Britain?

IN THE FACE of misplaced trust in the pure impulses of the British ruling classes, it is comforting to know that all of England is not Stanley Baldwin, Neville Chamberlain, and Anthony Eden. Not is it even Sir Walter Citrine or Lord Rothermere or Lord Beaverbrook. It is men of the stamp of John Strachey and Harold J. Laski and Victor Gollancz and Harry Pollitt and Stephen Spender and Ralph Fox, men who have been giving their full strength and their lives to a struggle which is even more evident in London than here. It is the men of the International Brigade, men of the stamp of W. H. Auden and Ralph Bates and Claude Cockburn, who have given up their books, their secluded lives of art and literature to fight the battle of Spain, the great climactic conflict between reason and Reaction! With all of our interest here in Spain, there are still men of great capacity for help concerning themselves with their petty private affairs. Again I cry with all the strength of my being, *this is the time for action!* Fascism has had its first serious setback. This is the moment to begin finishing the struggle. If Spain falls, there will inevitably come a time when our precious private plans for peace and achievement will be worth as little as the rights of the common worker under Hitler. Nobody who has met André Malraux can mistake the duty of an artist in these evil days.

As an indication of the spirit which moves Malraux and other sensitive natures, who would more readily be engaged in their strictly literary work, I want to quote from the letter of a woman who has lately been in Madrid:

> I have decided that I have to see this war through. Something has happened to me in Spain that is stronger than anything else at present. I have found that one can do anything if the will to do it is strong enough. I am so longer afraid of anything or anyone. . . . I went to the front-line trenches, I saw dead men, I helped a doctor in Madrid perform an operation on a soldier. I have been under fire and I am not nervous. Dr. Bethune can use me for blood transfusion work and I am staying. . . . I am staying because I can be of use in Spain. . . .

What we can do, we must do now. That stands for all of us!

MODERN POLITICAL CONTRETEMPS — William Sanderson

Crisis in Nazi genetics: A child born to the perfect Aryan parents demonstrates the ascendancy of environment over heredity.

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The Novel as Epic

This first of a series of essays on the novel, by a brilliant Marxist writer recently killed in Spain, sees realism and escapism historically

By Ralph Fox

IT is the main argument of this essay that the novel is the most important gift of bourgeois, or capitalist, civilization to the world's imaginative culture. The novel is its great adventure, its discovery of man. It may be objected that capitalism has also given us the cinema, and this is true, but only in a technical sense, for it has proved so far unable to develop it as an art. The drama, music, painting, and sculpture have all been developed by modern society, either for better or for worse, but all these arts had already gone through a long period of growth, as long almost as civilization itself, and their main problems were solved. With the novel, only one problem, the simplest one of all, that of telling a story, had been solved by the past.

Yet the novelists did not start off altogether from scratch. They had a certain amount of accumulated experience, an experience we can still use with profit today. As the Middle Ages drew to their close, the trading communities of Italy and England produced the first tellers of tales in the modern manner, in which the characters of men and women, the way they did things, began to matter almost as much as what they did. Chaucer and Boccaccio first showed the most important feature of the novelist, a curiosity about men and women. Perhaps you can feel it a little in Malory, but he was writing almost a century later than Chaucer, and though his medium was prose, one feels that he has fallen a long way behind the poet. True, he was writing in the midst of a society in the full anarchy of decay, but you will find truer Englishmen and women (and sometimes better prose) in the Paston letters than in Malory.

Malory's knights and ladies, his Round Table and his mystic Grael, his killings and his bawdrie, have all the elements of that most pernicious form of bourgeois literature, Romanticism. I will not allow Malory to the Middle Ages any more than Scott or Chateaubriand. He tells his tale as well as Scott, and his sentiment is seldom so nauseating as Chateaubriand's, but he remains the first great escapist, a man seeking refuge from a present both fearful and repellent in an idealized past. He abandoned realism, or rather, it never existed for him; Chaucer might never have lived, and if Malory ever read the *Canterbury Tales,* he no doubt considered them unpleasantly vulgar. In a sense, Euphues and Arcadia are part of his romantic tradition, as was the *Faery Queen.* They have their virtues as poetry, or as imaginative prose, but they held back the English imagination from developing in fiction. Perhaps that was no great matter. Dramatic poetry took all the best of our national genius at that time, and the Elizabethan age, though it produced some glorious pub stories and rogues' tales in defiance of the Euphues tradition, did not noticeably advance the novel.

Nor did the seventeenth century. But here I think there is a point worth making. H. G. Wells, in his autobiography, lets slip a very profound piece of self-criticism. "Exhaustive character-study," he writes, "is an adult occupation, a philosophical occupation. So much of my life has been a prolonged and enlarged adolescence, an encounter with the world in general, that the observation of character began to play a leading part in it only in my latter years. It was necessary for me to reconstruct the frame in which individual lives as a whole had to be lived, before I could concentrate upon any of the individual problems of fitting them into this frame."

It is true that novel-writing is a philosophical occupation. The great novels of the world, *Don Quixote, Gargantua and Pantagruel, Robinson Crusoe, Jonathan Wild, Jacques Le Fataliste, Le Rouge et Le Noir, War and Peace, L'Education Sentimentale, Wuthering Heights, The Way of All Flesh,* are great precisely because they have this quality of thought behind them, because they are highly imaginative, inspired, if you like, commentaries on life. It is this quality which distinguishes the first-rate from the second-rate in fiction. It is true that there are philosophers who have lamentably failed to write novels, but no novelist has ever been able to create without possessing that ability for generalization about his characters which is the result of a philosophical attitude to life.

The seventeenth century produced no great novels, but it did produce the philosophers who made possible the triumphs of the following century. Somehow I cannot but feel that the eighteenth century remains the supreme period in English fiction because it follows so closely upon the supreme period in English philosophy. English philosophy was the creation of the bourgeois revolution in our country, and it was profoundly materialist. "Materialism is the true son of Great Britain," writes Marx. "It was the English schoolman, Duns Scotus, who asked 'whether matter could not think.'" Berkeley, the first English idealist, only inverted Locke's sensualist philosophy, as Sterne only sentimentalized the materialism of Rabelais and the imaginative power of Cervantes.

Rabelais and Cervantes, the real founders of the novel, were more fortunate than their successors in that they did not live in the new society of which they were the heralds. They were men of the transition period, children of the revolutionary storms which broke up medieval feudalism, and they were inspired by the greatest flow of new ideas, the most exciting rebirth that man has ever known in his history (leaving aside the vexed question of whether or not we are today again entering on such a period).

Their two works are still to this day unchallenged for vigor of life, for force of imagination, and for richness of language. They stood between two worlds. They were able to mock and to flay the vices of the old world, but they by no means uncritically accepted the new. The same is true of Shakespeare, and, indeed, of all the great figures of the Renaissance. Man has lost in stature since then what he has gained in mastery over the brave new world which they saw beginning to open before their delighted but not uncritical eyes.

Rabelais asserts the independence of that pathetic, curious, and delightful instrument of life, the human body, and gives a new war-cry to the mind within that body, the mind which was just discovering life anew, "Do what you will!" He wrought a revolution in language no less astonishing than in thought, as a study of any competent historical grammar of the French language will tell us. Here again is a point to bear in mind—the immense significance of the writer in the revolutionizing of language. After the Renaissance, the next great flow of life into the French language came from the romantic movement which was the child of the Great Revolution. The same is roughly true of our own language.

In Cervantes, the revolutionary nature of his work is more implicit than explicit. The drama of his view of life expresses itself in the relation between his two chief characters and again in the relation of Quixote and Sancho to the world outside them. In this way his novel marks a step forward from Rabelais, but between them these two forged for the novelist every weapon that he needed. Rabelais gave him humor and the poetry of language; Cervantes gave him irony and the poetry of feeling. They were universal geniuses, and no work equal in stature to theirs has since been written in that variegated prose fiction which we call the novel.

It is worth while to note that both were men of action as well as novelists, that both suffered persecution, and that neither of them would have known what Mr. David Garnett meant if he had been able to talk to them about a "pure artist." If they had managed at last to understand that curious and con-

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tradictory phrase, each would have hugged it, after his own fashion, to his bosom, and then unburdened himself, the one obscenely and happily, the other gravely and ironically, upon such a peculiar and perverted concept.

The novelists, the epic writers of the new society, had therefore a great heritage on which to draw. How did they acquit themselves of their task? In Britain, for a half century or so, with honor, even though they never achieved the heights which the French and Spanish giants had conquered. The novel was a weapon, not in the crude sense of being a political pamphlet; but in the period of its birth and first healthy growth it was the weapon by which the best, most imaginative representatives of the bourgeoisie examined the new man and woman and the society in which they lived. That is the all-important fact about the eighteenth-century writers. They did not shrink from man, they believed in him, believed in his ability to master the world, while they were not for a moment blind to the cruelty and injustice of this world of which their heroes were so much a part.

Fielding has been blamed because he introduced "sermons" into his novels, but if the sermons were all removed, the social criticism would be there just the same, implicit in his story, and we should have lost some of the best essays in the English language. Better to leave the essays and accept the sad truth that Fielding, having lived before Flaubert and the Goncourt brothers, not to mention Henry James, really did not know that there were certain rules in polite literary society which have to be observed in the writing of a novel. He was the first Englishman to understand that the job of a novelist was to tell the truth about life as he saw it, and he told it in his own way. In *Jonathan Wild* he told it as it has never been told before or since, as even Swift never succeeded in telling it, with a fierce and brutal anger which lives because it is human anger awakened by the degradation of human life.

Fielding has been criticized, notably by Mr. David Garnett in his essay in *The English Novelists,* for lack of imagination expressed in a certain brutality towards suffering. It is true that there were some intimate depths of the human heart which found no expression in his work, he was an objective rather than a subjective writer, and if this limitation is at times a hindrance to his observation, it would be fair to say that the subjectivists, Richardson, Sterne, and Rousseau, have probably lost even more by their renunciation of the objective world, and have limited their vision still more severely.

But the accusation of brutality as a reproach to Fielding the novelist is inept as well as unjust. He lived in a brutal world, the world of conquering capitalism, the period when the English squire was crushing the English peasant out of existence, when the English adventurer was stealing the wealth of the Indies by means as horrible as they were (in the abstract sense) immoral, and when that accumulation of stolen wealth was being made in the country which was to make possible the Industrial Revolution. That strange genius, Warren Hastings, our English revenge on the East for Genghis Khan, was a child in Fielding's day. Walpole was the prime minister of his maturity. And the chapters of *Jonathan Wild* on the great man's share in the proper division of booty and "of hats" are the true reflection of his corrupt and plundering age. As well accuse Fielding of brutality as the author of *Lady into Fox* of being insensitive to the real life of his own age.*

THERE is a dualism in the writers of the eighteenth century, not only interesting but important. Defoe, Fielding, and Smollett are concerned with a purely objective picture of the world. Their characters have little or no "inner life," and these authors spend no time on analysis either of feeling or of motive, for they are more concerned with describing "how" than "why." This does not exclude "why." Far from it. It is usually sufficiently clear to the reader why a character acts as he does, for the action flows from the character as we know it. In the famous case, for example, where Moll Flanders refrained from murdering the child whom she robbed, it seems clear enough why she refrained, perfectly in keeping with Moll's character as we know it. For Defoe, the interesting thing is that she was satisfied with robbery and stopped short of child murder. That appears more interesting than "why." Dostoievsky, however, could have written a whole novel for us entirely around this (relatively) trivial incident, a novel entirely concerned with "why."

The eighteenth century developed a completely new kind of novel, the novel concerned only with the individual's motives and feelings, in which the general social picture hardly counts at all. Robinson Crusoe was a supreme affirmation of the individual, but he was an individual who lived entirely outside himself, the typical man of the new world in one sense, but not in another. Crusoe discovered that he alone could conquer the world. It was left to Sterne and to Rousseau to discover that the individual alone *was* the world. The same thing had happened in philosophy when Berkeley turned Locke's empiricism upside down and produced his philosophy of subjective idealism which admitted no reality outside our own consciousness. It was a revolutionary and far-reaching idea in fiction, this taking of the consciousness of the individual as the starting point of one's picture of the world. It early reached its logical conclusion when Restif de Bretonne dedicated his autobiographical novel *Monsieur Nicolas* to himself, but if it could sometimes be ridiculous, and if in the end it destroyed the novel, the new method could also be sublime.

The fact is that neither the view of Fielding on reality nor the view of Richardson and Sterne is a complete one. The exclusion of sentiment and analysis, the failure to see the subjective side of the individual, deprived the novel of imagination and fantasy, just as the centering of all action in the individual consciousness deprived it of its epic quality. Such a division in Cervantes was unthinkable. It was the creation of a fully developed capitalist society which had completed the separation of the individual from society, just as in another two generations it was to begin the subdivision of individuals themselves in the completion of its minute and complex division of social labor.

The new school, however, with their disturbing discovery of "sensibility," were the forerunners of a revolution in the novel. Richardson, a little tearfully but none the less

* The "brutal" Fielding, it is worth remembering, instigated some of the most important reforms in the barbarous judicial system of England. He was also the first man to draw up a scheme for a civilized police force which should inspire public respect and affection rather than fear and hatred.

We of the Streets

Streets are full of the scent of us—odors of onions drifting from doorways, effluvium of baby new-born downstairs, seeping smells of warm soap-suds—the streets are lush with the ferment of our living.

Our sea is water swirling in gutters; our lightning is the blue flame of an acetylene torch; billboards blossom with the colors of a billion flowers; we hear thunder when the "L" roars; our strip of sky is a dirty shirt.

We have grown used to nervous landscapes, chimney-broken horizons, and the sun dying between tenements; we have grown to love streets, the ways of streets; our bodies are hard like worn pavement.

Our emblems are street emblems: stringy curtains blowing in windows; sticky-fingered babies tumbling on door-steps; deep-cellared laughs meant for everybody; slow groans heard in area-ways.

Our sunshine is a common hope; our common summer and common winter a common joy and a common sorrow; our fraternity is shoulder-rubbing crude with unspoken love; our password the wry smile that speaks a common fate.

Our love is nurtured by the soft flares of gas-lights; our hate is an icy wind screaming around corners.

And there is something in the streets that made us feel immortality when we rushed along ten thousand strong, hearing our chant fill the world, wanting to do what none of us would do alone, aching to shout the forbidden word, knowing that we of the streets are deathless. . . .

RICHARD WRIGHT.

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truly, disclosed the most intimate feelings of the human heart. Had he only possessed Fielding's steady vision of life and firm hold on reality, nothing could have prevented him from becoming one of the world's greatest novelists. It is a vain thing to wish a writer had possessed qualities he most obviously did not have, but this time there is some justification for the silly regret, since Richardson's failings have inevitably if unjustly reduced him to the position of a museum piece, from being a living writer to an historical and literary "influence."

Sterne carried the retreat from reality even further. Richardson had only been concerned with the feelings of his characters, but he had retained, despite his correspondence form which he borrowed from France and his own domestic experience, the traditions of the story told in time. Sterne at a blow destroyed all this. "To be or not to be" might well be called the central problem of the hero's fate in *Tristram Shandy,* in a literal sense undreamed of by Hamlet, and so far as this reader is concerned he never could discover for certain whether the problem was adequately solved, despite the complications attending the physical process of Tristram Shandy's birth which are so amusingly described. Sterne murders time in his novel. Shall a novel tell a story? Yes, answer the school of relativists, it may tell a story if it can be a detective story in which the reader seeks for the clue to beginning, middle, and end, is continually baffled, and then has it all explained to him later by the author, or, in extreme cases, by the author's friends in specially written commentaries.

Sterne had all the divine gifts of the greatest novelists, he had irony, fantasy, a delight in obscenity, a love of humanity, everything the fairies bring to genius at birth, everything but one gift, the ability to set his characters to live in a real world. He liked to think of himself as the English Rabelais, he copied Cervantes in the creation of Uncle Toby and Trim, but he was not Rabelais and he was most certainly not Cervantes. These two were discoverers of a new world, they were at war with life as well as in love with life, but Sterne was only the garrulous eighteenth-century gentleman trying to reconcile himself with Aristocratic society. He is much more amusing and has much more genius than his remote descendant Swann, but it is the same impulse that created the two books. Sterne was the first author to destroy time, to introduce relativism into the novel, but he did it, not in the interests of a greater reality, but because he found it easier that way to talk about himself. What greater reality, asks the idealist, can there be than oneself? Why, the reality of those who don't like you and think you rather an ass, of course, the reality of those who thought Sterne a self-advertising obscenity and Proust a pretentious social climber. But they were wrong? Yes, they were wrong, though Sterne and Proust, by trying so desperately to prove them wrong, diminished their own value as *creative* artists.

The real revolutionary of the eighteenth century was, strictly speaking, not a novelist at all, though he was one of the greatest imaginative prose writers of all time. Rousseau held the illusion, fostered by eighteenth-century French materialism, that education could change man. Certainly this is not all illusion, and if man's social environment is favorable it may even be true, provided man is also actively working to change himself. Rousseau's theory led him to believe that the influence of nature is one of the most powerful influences which can change man's character for the better. It is a sad illusion, but in cultivating that illusion Rousseau did a great service to literature, for he brought back nature into art. Without him we should never have known Egdon Heath, nor Tolstoi's reapers, nor Conrad's Pacific.

The eighteenth century was the golden age of the novel. The novel of this period did not have the high fantasy of Cervantes and Rabelais, who showed how imagination can transform reality by a dæmon force, but it was not afraid of man, and spoke the truth about life with an uncompromising courage. It had wit also, and humor, and it compelled man to understand that the individual had an inner life as well as an outer life. It discovered nature for him and it roused him to consider, in the work of Fielding, Swift, Voltaire, Diderot, and Rousseau, that all was not for the best in the best of all possible worlds. It roused him not before it was time, because the world of the eighteenth century was about to die in the greatest revolutionary convulsion of all history. But one thing the century failed to do. It produced no novel which combined the humane realism of Fielding with the sensibility of Richardson, with Sterne's ironic wit and Rousseau's passionate love of nature. Nor was the nineteenth century to succeed any better, though in Balzac and Tolstoi it came nearer than ever before. Indeed, taken as a whole, the nineteenth century was one of retreat, a retreat which has ended in a panic rout in our own day.

Painting by Anton Refregier (American Artists' School)

Day in the News

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"If God Keeps Them Humble"

That "if" seems to be a large one as the sharecroppers and tenant farmers push their campaign for bread and land

By Stanley Milliken

"IF God keeps them humble, I'll keep them poor," was the promise of a Southern cotton planter referring to his colored tenants. The brutal remark is not alien to the South. The planters have enforced both humility and poverty. Now the economic forces at work have carried matters beyond the control of the landlord. As the system of tenancy and sharecropping cracks, the humility of the exploited is also worn thin. The "best minds" of the nation become alarmed. Proposals are made to cure the evils of tenancy. A program will be embarked upon. The best minds will be turning to other matters. But the roots of crisis in the South will not have been dug out. The lightning flare of this planter's brutal remark may suggest the reason why. Let us test its validity for the situation, and then see how the various palliatives stand the test.

Consider the best cotton lands of the South, where no part of the miseries of tenancy can be ascribed to a worn-out or niggardly nature. The Mississippi delta, from above Memphis to the Gulf, has thousands upon thousands of acres of rich alluvial bottomlands capable of yielding nearly four times as much cotton per acre as the average for the rest of the South. Why is it that even of an oasis land like this, Secretary of Agriculture Wallace could rightly say, "I have never seen among the peasantry of Europe poverty so abject as that which exists in this favorable cotton year in the great cotton states from Arkansas on to the East Coast"?

The Civil War "freed" the slave from the old relationship to his means of subsistence, the soil. A new relationship was evolved that bound him quite as effectively as before. It took the form that called for the least cash outlay on the landowner's part, a yearly contracting on "shares" of the crop. Like vines choking a young tree, the clutches of credit, of commissaries, of cheating, of oppression and terrorism, sapped the life out of this arrangement. And agricultural crisis, arising out of world economic contradictions, complete the job. It has reached the point where the planter, with the best intentions in the world, *has* to exploit his tenants to make a profit. Then he has to perfect a system of apologetics that takes his thinking out of the realm of the rational. He talks kindly to "his" croppers, they smile back at him, and he is ready to tell the world that all is well with the system because "his niggers" are happy. Whatever is poor in their condition he attributes to their natural limitations. Whatever is tolerable, he attributes to his own generosity.

"Before the Civil War," a county agricultural agent told me, "if a nigger was lazy, you hit him on the back; now you hit him in the stomach." And to elucidate, he added, "a hound hunts best on an empty stomach." How do you hit him in the stomach? The delta Negro has a jingle which goes: "A word and a word, a figger and a figger—it's all for the white man, an' none for the nigger." Or he will say, "Deducks done got me," meaning that he might have made something on his crop if the boss-man hadn't "deducted" so much for various advances, say eighteen dollars a month for seven months for "furnish" during growing season, fertilizer costs, from 20 percent to 30 percent for interest charges, and perhaps the costs of a midwife's services, a baby's burial, or both.

What happens if the cropper resents his landlord's bookkeeping, and does not smile back? This recital is typical, taken verbatim from a study of social conditions in the area: "I can't find no farm. The last place I was, we had a little falling out and these folks won't rent me nothing now. The old man I was with just baffled me out of my living, and me and him had it out one day. Then I had to leave, and come to town. I been here three years, and won't nobody let me farm."

MANY FIGURES on the average cropper's unbelievable poverty have come out of recent tenancy-committee reports. The wage worker in cotton averaged $180 income a year, with no garden to supplement his living. The cropper's income figure might be $284, as in one study covering eastern Arkansas. But not all this in cash; first subtract about eighteen dollars a month for six or seven months, charged against his "settlement" for the "furnish" that kept his family alive during growing months. (And remember that the eighteen dollars doubtless bought less than fifteen dollars worth of necessaries if estimated in northern store prices.) Then subtract about fifty dollars for the estimated rent of a two-room shack falling to pieces. Then another sixty dollars for estimated value of home-grown products (corn, pork, etc.). Then another small amount for incidentals, sickness, etc. And finally another 20 to 30 percent of this total for credit charges. Few croppers are handed as much as $100 at "settlement." Little wonder that by planting time, with a few cheap clothes bought, the cropper is back to borrowing.

The essential phrase to characterize the plight of the sharecropping system is "vicious circle." We have noted the circle of credit driving the tenant back again and again hopelessly into a contract which often finds him at the end of a year owing his landlord for the privilege of having worked a year for him (with family labor thrown in for good measure).

Let us note other examples. The single cash crop is the bane of the South, we are told. But the "share contract" impels the tenant to produce all the cash crop he can, so as to obtain more in his share. But his share is limited to what he and his family can economically handle. Half of the proceeds at best would barely feed the family. Debt and cheating cut in on this, which leads in turn to an even greater emphasis on the cash crop, in the effort to get out from under the debt.

As a corollary to the evils of the single cash crop, we are told that croppers do not produce enough of their own food. But the planters' commissaries make profits selling food to these workers. Some landlords have even boasted that they made more from their commissaries than from their crop transactions. Can we expect that the planter will encourage home gardens, which take time away from the main profit drive? A true story was told me of a cropper in Arkansas who planted some corn for himself between the rows of cotton. After he had harvested this corn, he was arrested by his landlord, and charged with stealing it. The bewildered cropper was released, but found that his settlement account at the end of the year was charged $22.40 for court costs.

The great bulk of the sharecropper's income is spent on the poorest of foods. One third of his income goes for meal and flour; 27 percent goes for lard and "fatback," his only meat; grits, sorghum, flour gravy, and gristly "fatback" are his diet. Yet landlords do not customarily attribute the "laziness" of their tenants to malnutrition. The marvel is that he has the energy to work at all.

THE FOLLOWING recital, quoted in Lewis Wade Jones's *Social Study of Tenant Farmers,* permits a glimpse of privation that Americans have thought could exist only in Chinese famines (yet being in the center of a "rich" country, the Red Cross was not needed): "Yesterday Mr. Minor, the boss-man, come through the field and asked me how I felt. I just stopped my hoeing and said, 'Mr. Minor, I just don't know how I feel.' He says, 'What's the trouble, Julia, don't you feel well?' I say, 'I'm just hungry,

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William Hernandez

Organizing Sharecroppers

Mr. Minor.' 'Ain't you got nothing to eat at your house, Julia?' 'I ain't got nothing but fatback and corn bread, and I done eat that so long I believes I got the pellagacy, Mr. Minor.' His face turn red when I say that and he said, 'Well, Sat'day I'm going to give you some flour, too; just come by the office.' "

Or consider the "vicious circle" if the tenant is ambitious to climb the agricultural ladder. Let him save money under a "good" landlord, even through lean years of agricultural crisis. Then can he buy land? If he wants enough of the rich delta land to farm economically as an independent, he must mortgage himself to the ears. The first ill wind topples him back. The death of a mule is enough, perhaps. But he might, neighbors willing, obtain "hill county" land, many more acres for much less. He will keep scratching the soil for a time, then its sterility will force him out, back to seek another cropper contract. In the cotton South, the agricultural ladder might better be called the agricultural squirrel cage.

Or trace another orbit of the enmeshing circle. The tenant, says his landlord, needs strict supervision and control because he is just like an animal, ignorant, illiterate, and irresponsible. Yet responsible traits, being akin to independent traits, are discouraged. You will be informed that "education ruins the tenant," makes him "uppity," makes him "forget his place." The naïveté of tenants is a prerequisite of the system.

Schools assist in preserving the system by not educating. Often broken-down country churches are used, without desks, light, heat, or teaching paraphernalia. The state of Mississippi spends eight times as much to educate a white child in a year as it does to teach a colored child. Negro teachers get as little as $25 a month. Schools are closed during "chopping" (hoeing, weeding) and picking seasons. The children, often no higher than the cotton rows, work alongside their parents from "kin to cain't." Four months schooling a year is all the colored child is guaranteed, and by twelve or fourteen he has left off school for good. Is it conceivable that the South would use good money, even if Uncle Sam provided it, to give the cropper's child a real education now? About as likely as that every public school in the country would introduce elementary Marxism into the curriculum.

And here's one more vicious circle, akin to the problem facing our national economy. Southern farm workers lack effective (money) demand for clothing made of the very crop they grow at the cabin doors. They lack underwear, tablecloths, sheets; often shirts and dresses are made of old floursacks, and overalls are patched beyond belief. If they were given enough to enable them to buy back in finished goods their share of the cotton they produce, perhaps the country might discover a shortage instead of the perennial surplus which "crop control" is to remedy. When the A.A.A. cotton payments bailed out the planters from their debt prison (they kept nine-tenths), and as surely squeezed an estimated quarter of a million tenants off the land, an opportunity was afforded some shrewd landlords to shift from the share-contracts over to the wage-hand system. In this system, the worker has no claim to "furnish" during the months when his work is not required (about 120 days' labor is needed for a cotton crop);

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during this time, the planter could leave his worker to shift for himself. But what a hue and cry for workers during the busy picking season! Then we learned that the $21 a month "relief" onto which some of the dispossessed had been forced was "demoralizing the Negro." In Arkansas delta counties, the wage-labor category jumped nearly 25 percent in the five years between 1930 and 1935. As one worker said, they had "swapped the devil for a witch."

This tendency to shift to wage labor is allied to the drive of industrialization which is threatening the last feudalistic strongholds in the South. And it is allied to the mechanization of farming, and the prospect of the cotton picker coming to do the work of a hundred human hands. The level Southwest will drive cotton production costs down to a point at which the planter in the Deep South will be hard put to it to compete even if his tenants starve humbly.

How, in the light of all this, can remedial proposals be brought forward with the comment that they "will hurt no one?" Did the taking away of slaves from the South hurt no one? Will the idealistic program not be thwarted, as the dream of emancipation was? Will tenants really be removed from the control of landlords without "hurting" the latter?

"Caution" and "experiment" are the watchwords. Perhaps in a couple of hundred years things will be straightened out. And while this is hurting no one, all the hurts that study has revealed are forgotten. Present resettlement cannot pretend to solve the cruel problem of rehabilitation for the landless cotton worker. Few are chosen, turnover is high, management arbitrary and inept. Government cheques have been delayed, and Uncle Sam's tenants have nearly starved, or been thrown back to the same old credit sharks.

In the last couple of years, those who dared hope for improvement in conditions moved into battle behind the Bankhead-Jones proposals. But they might have smelled a rat when even the landlords were being sold the idea. Wasn't it a unique opportunity to unload surplus lands onto the government at juicy prices? And to complete the irony behind this pink pill for pallid economy, Secretary Wallace had only to point out that the fifty million dollars a year suggested would not arrest a third of the yearly drop of forty thousand into tenancy, much less cure the present ills.

No amounts are specified in the latest proposals of the President's Tenancy Committee. (One real tenant representative was finally admitted to this committee. Before that happened, the complaint of Gardner Jackson, of the Washington Committee to Aid Agricultural Workers, that no actual croppers or tenants were on the tenancy committee, was answered by a county agent in this way: "Would you put a chicken on a Poultry Board?")

The Farm Security Administration and Corporation, which would buy lands to place tenants in a position to own them after forty years, would be placed under the Department of Agriculture. In the past, the interests of the upper farmers has admittedly preoccupied this department. Can we expect a change of heart? If Washington changes, can we expect the local staffs, county agents, etc., to renounce their social ties with landlords, and embark on a program that cuts the ground out from under the landlord's accustomed life? This work should be under the Labor Department, and tenants should be proportionately represented on all boards affecting their interests. But do you think this form of democracy will obtain in the Democratic South?

Recommendations of the minority report of this committee reveal weaknesses in the main report. Health and education proposals are too vague to have meaning. The Wagner Labor Relations Act should cover the cotton-farming South, and social security should be made available. And there is the matter of really extending the vote to all, regardless of race or politics.

COOPERATIVES must be the ultimate weapons of competition of the freed tenant against the landlord's large-scale operations and combines. But proposals to dive directly into government-sponsored coöperative cotton plantations will meet with objection from every side except the theorists of liberal bent. Even the tenant is "land hungry."

A more feasible suggestion is put forward by the Farmers' Union. Instead of financing (at around $4000 a family) the buying of land toward ownership, give eight times as many croppers the equipment needed to set them up as renters, meanwhile affording supplementary credit and other facilities, as well as the advice and supervision necessary.

This is not to say that coöperatives are not to be aided. The most heartening sight in the South is the pioneer drive of members of the Delta Coöperative in Mississippi, building a little new world which, as one of them said, he wouldn't swap "for the whole damn state of Arkansas." But not enough coöperatives could be built to answer that imperative *now* of Roosevelt's recent speech. The opposition to coöperatives is bound to be greater than to any other proffered solution. Others must first be pushed.

Among these, a powerful set of proposals is to be cast in the form of a bill by the Farm Holiday Association. A five-hundred-million dollar appropriation for the first year is to be among its provisions. Interest on loans to carry out the detailed program will be set at the low figure of 1½ percent. It will be the only answer at all commensurate with the problem which official surveys have posed so starkly and answered so tamely.

We who wish to fight back the encroachments of fascism abroad must recognize a parallel here in our cotton South. Not alone in the measures to defend civil liberties, but also in the struggle toward sweeping change, we confront a fascistic pressure. Just as Europe's democracies defer to fascist bravado, so too will our liberally gesturing national figures finally defer to the "rights" of the landed interests in the South—unless we back the militant agricultural unions, and fight with them to put real teeth into tenancy proposals now that the issue is hot.

Joseph Serrano

"He hasn't eaten all day. He's trying to get a radical slant on things."

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READERS' FORUM

An open letter to John Haynes Holmes—On "straight" art —The Puerto Rico murders

● SIR: I address myself to you because you have often, in time of stress, stood more firmly than many others of your calling and your liberalism upon grounds of principle and verifiable fact. Also because you have yourself written: "My years of experience in observing cataclysmic events, and in successfully training myself to sift evidence, analyze reports, recognize facts, and detect propaganda, must have taught me something about the nature of truth and error in times that try men's souls." Why, then, did you, in a recent "symposium" about the Moscow trial of Piatakov, Radek, and the others, write: "If the defendants were guilty, then is the whole early revolution utterly discredited. If the men are innocent, then is the Stalin regime discredited. It is a perfect and complete tragedy, whatever way you look at it." Is it not too easy, Sir, to avoid the arduous task of decision and content yourself with the facile dictum that, in any event, the greatest social revolution in history to date is discredited?

Allow me to ask: *Does the fact that Judas betrayed Christ discredit Christianity?* Does the fact that Benedict Arnold betrayed the American Revolution discredit the Washington regime, or the American Revolution? Does the fact that Mussolini was once a Socialist discredit the underground mass movement in Italy? Does the fact that Pilsudski, once a Socialist, once exiled by the czar to Siberia, died as dictator of Poland, discredit the social revolution against the czar, or the Polish revolutionary movement? Does MacDonald's treachery in England discredit the English labor movement?

Does the fact that William Green, who was once an advocate of industrial unionism and of independent political action, now connives with the bosses to split the industrial-union movement in the automobile, steel, and other industries—does that discredit the American labor movement?

And if not, by what right do you charge that the fact that Trotskyists have betrayed the Soviet Union discredits utterly the whole early revolution? Is it not rather true that the guilt of the defendants discredits them alone, and brands them as traitors?

But how could they be traitors? How could Judas, Arnold, Mussolini, and William Green turn traitor? Is the *fact* that they are traitors to be denied because honorable men find treason so alien to their minds? Is an act to be judged "incredible" because men are naïve, and refuse to learn from the innumerable examples of history? Every profound social movement has had its traitors. In vast social upheavals (and which has been more vast than the Russian Revolution?) many men have always fallen by the wayside, traitors. Does that mean that we must shun social revolution because there will be traitors to it?

Marx knew better. Writing about the Paris Commune, he said: "In every revolution, there intrude, at the side of its true agents, men of a different stamp; some of them survivors of and devotees to past revolution, without insight into the present movement, but preserving popular influence by their known honesty and courage, or by sheer force of tradition; others mere bawlers, who by dint of repeating year after year the same set of stereotyped phrases against the government of the day have sneaked into the reputation of revolutionists of the first water. . . . These are an unavoidable evil; with time they are shaken off."

It is necessary to fight traitors, to ferret them out, to expose them. Judas has not made you lose faith in Christianity; why should Trotsky make you lose faith in revolution? Is not one who says that treason discredits the ideal betrayed, himself betraying that ideal? Would you not say that to the cynic in the temple who should throw Judas in your face to deny Christianity? Should we not say that to *you?*

You closed your statement in that "symposium" with the sentence: "A government which can do such things, *whether the men be guilty or not,* is not far removed from the Nazis of Germany." Is it not a shameful thing to try to smear the Soviet Union with the filth of Nazism in this sly way? *If the men were guilty they got what they deserved. Honor can dictate no other answer.* You say: "It is a basic principle in our country to believe a man innocent until he has been proved guilty. . . ." And yet you betray that principle when you *assume* the guilt of the Soviet Union, no matter what the facts may show about the guilt of the Trotskyite defendants.

You have spent a lifetime in the fight for peace. It is appalling that you should not recognize in the Moscow trial a great contribution to the cause of peace. The very exposure of the war plots of the Japanese and German governments, plots that were to mature in this very year, helps maintain world peace. Why should you so readily allow yourself to be deceived and swerved from your struggle for peace by the propaganda of Hearst, Trotsky, and the capitalist press, rejecting in the process the judgment of independent observers and journalists present at the trials, as well as the published testimony?

Can you not undertand that you cannot be a friend of the Soviet Union, and a friend of peace, if you associate yourself with the enemy of the Soviet Union, the enemy of peace, Leon Trotsky?

MORRIS U. SCHAPPES.

From Artist Ajay

● I wish to take issue with the following statement by Maynard Dixon published in the Readers' Forum of April 6th: "The radical press preaches that the materials and technique of a cartoon should be secondary to its intent. . . . This conviction is fully justified. . . ."

I sincerely doubt that the radical press "preaches" the above doctrine or that it is "fully justified." Technique and intent cannot be separated with impunity, nor made one subordinate to the other. The means, in art, conditions the end and vice versa. If the radical press has appeared relatively satisfied with the eclipsing of technique by intent, then that is rather acquiescence than preachment. If different objectives require different methods of approach, then that, it seems, is adaptation rather than "neglect of the facts of subject matter." Art will not be regimented, nor must technical deviation be confused with "technical hokum." A bee-line may well be the shortest distance between two points, but surely it is not always the most logical and efficacious. I should think the rapier more effective at close quarters than the slapstick.

Let there be no moaning at the bar, Reader Dixon, should it become expedient at times to term a spade a shovel. There's always "Orphan Annie."

ABE AJAY.

The Ponce Massacre

● The following is a translation of a leaflet issued by the Communist Party of Puerto Rico which gives very clearly the sequence of events at Ponce [see "Murder in Holy Week," NEW MASSES, April 6, 1937].

"We, the people of Puerto Rico, accuse Governor Winship of conspiracy to overthrow the Constitution of the United States by force of arms. We accuse him of responsibility for the cold-blooded murder of eighteen Puerto Ricans and of the wounding of 150 others, including women and children. We charge that the Palm Sunday massacre in Ponce was a deliberately planned murder with no parallel in all of American history.

J. D. Egleson

"When the American patriots of 1775 were assassinated in Boston, the colonies were on the verge of revolution. We were not. The American revolutionists did not have freedom of speech and assembly. 'Constitutionally' we have.

"Then why did Colonel Orbeta [chief of the Insular Police] go to Ponce on the morning of the massacre? Why were the police present with submachine guns? Why was the permit rescinded an hour before the killing? There can be only one answer. The government of Governor Winship was plotting murder.

"Who started the shooting? The Nationalists or the police? Let us see. One month ago, when the Nationalists had an island-wide concentration in Caguas, the police requested the mayor to revoke the permit. He refused and told them that 'they would asume all responsibility for what happened.' The parade was held without a single disturbance.

"In Ponce, the mayor gave in to police pressure (read: Winship) and rescinded the permit.

"The following occurred: The Nationalists, with many spectators watching, were assembling to march in spite of the withdrawal of the permit. The police, armed with carbines and sub-machine guns, were posted on both sides of the assemblers. Suddenly one of the marchers gave the command to fall in. Just as suddenly, a policeman fired in the air. This was the signal. Immediately the police raised their weapons and began their murder of unarmed men, women, and children, participants and spectators.

"What is it they wanted? To disperse the marchers? The crowd dispersed; but no, this was not enough. The doctors report that the majority of victims were shot in the back—in other words they shot at fleeing people.

"Our military governor, General Winship, instructed his troops well. 'When the enemy flees—kill them.' But the general does not seem to know the war is over. This is 1937, General. This island has 'constitutional' freedom of speech and assembly. This is neither Italy nor Germany. Or is it?

"Don Pedro Albizu Campos sits in prison now, charged with conspiracy to overthrow the United States government by violence and force of arms, accused of assassination and terrorism.

"We ask: who are the assassins? Who are the conspirators againt the constitution? Who are the terrorists? There can be only one answer. Those responsible for these acts are the governor and his police force.

"We, as free citizens of Puerto Rico, demand the removal of that man who is at war with the Puerto Rican people—Governor Winship. We demand the liberation of the political prisoners.

"Forward to a broad people's front of all parties and groups who will not tolerate the massacre of our people! May our slogan be that which the shot Nationalist wrote with his own blood on the pavement just before he died. *'Vive la Republica! Abajo los assesinos!'* [Down with the assasins!]

"Communist Party of Puerto Rico."

Comrades, with your aid we can achieve those immediate objectives: the removal of Governor Winship, freedom for Albizu Campos and the other political prisoners. Write your protests to President Roosevelt—but write *now.* Let the whole world hear of this unbelievable massacre. With your aid we will accomplish these demands and go forward to complete independence from the real culprit—Yankee imperialism.

WILLIAM ELLIS.

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NEW MASSES

ESTABLISHED 1911

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The Socialist Party's Progress

THERE is such an abundance of loose ends and dark corners in relation to the recent special convention of the Socialist Party that any definitive appraisal is as yet premature. For the first time in its entire history, the party found it necessary to hold its convention *in camera*. Newspapermen were not admitted to any of the sessions proper, and the daily handouts were strictly noninformative. Some of the resolutions are still not available. It appears that the American Socialists are rapidly adopting not only the policies but also the manners of a sect.

Meeting under circumstances which threatened the party with another split, the most influential leaders, especially Norman Thomas, were mainly concerned with the delicate business of keeping the conflicts described in the NEW MASSES of March 30 under cover. On the whole, the convention resolutions reflect political trades rather than political principles.

Consider the position adopted on the farmer-labor party question, substantially as originally presented by Thomas. The resolution begins by definitely committing the party to a national farmer-labor party "wherever conditions are favorable." Conditions for such participation are four. It must "consciously represent the interests of workers with hand and brain"; but whether such a party does objectively represent these interests or how much "consciousness" will be required is left unsaid. It must, "from its inception, have the definite support of important sections of organized workers and farmers"; though it is not stated whether the Socialist Party will do its share of the work of getting such support or whether that has to be done by others or whether it all has to be done "spontaneously."

It "should be committed at least to the general principle of production for use"; but if "production for use" means socialism then it ought to be so stated, and no such vague affirmation ought to be confused with real socialism; and if it does not, why import additional confusion? It should permit the affiliation of the Socialist Party as a unit or, "failing that, to receive Socialist support, it must permit membership of Socialists on terms compatible with the maintenance of the Socialist Party." This latter point is a decided step forward, because the pro-Trotskyist factions are most inflexibly opposed to anything but unit affiliation.

This resolution embodies the more hopeful side of the convention (none too exciting, of course). It goes beyond previous endorsements of the farmer-labor party on a number of counts, but it still suffers from the chief blight: sectarian aloofness from the movement in process of development until certain ideal conditions have been met through the work of others. For this reason, the resolution deals solely with generalities, and fails to give the position of the party in relation to actually existing farmer-labor movements, such as the Wisconsin Progressive Federation, the American Labor Party, Labor's Non-Partisan League, and others. This is all the more damaging in view of the activity of Socialists in Wisconsin and Minnesota.

In Wisconsin, the Socialist Party entered the Wisconsin Progressive Federation on terms not compatible with the resolution. Is it principled or expedient to disregard that fact? In Minnesota, the Trotskyists who operate in the name of the Socialist Party have actually endorsed the mayor of Minneapolis, Thomas E. Latimer, for reëlection, despite Latimer's notorious record as chief Minnesota strike-breaker. To do this, they actually had to split the regular Farmer-Labor Party convention and organize a rump convention for Latimer. The issue precipitated the most bitter dissension at the convention, but what do we read in the resolution? That the endorsement of Latimer "was based on numerous factors and a very complicated situation," that a sub-committee will study the question, and that the Minneapolis Trotskyists acted in "perfect good faith." This resolution indicates the fate of the party under Trotskyist influence. The so-called "greater evil" of outright reaction is chosen in preference to the "lesser evil" of a real Farmer-Labor Party under cover of propaganda against both!

The united-front resolution starts off with an introduction full of unexceptionable generalities until it gets down to the inevitable "conditions." United front with the Communists is limited solely to local issues *if, if,* and *if*. *If* "such action is likely to make the Socialist Party more or less effective in the work of reaching the masses"; but this places the whole emphasis on the party interests of the Socialist Party instead of the broad class interests of the masses. *If* the united front is not limited solely to the Socialist and Communist parties; but this rejects that united front which is an immediate possibility. *If* "the proposed united front activities absorb energy of party members out of proportion to the promised results"; but the "promised results" will partly depend upon the "energy of party members," and the interests of the party should not, in any event, overshadow the interests of the class.

The full texts of only these three resolutions are available in the *Socialist Call* of April 3. They indicate that the convention did not really grapple with the main problems of the party. The Trotskyist issue was glossed over, though the Trotskyists and their allies failed to win out on some of the most important issues, especially that devoted to the farmer-labor party. The war in Spain might have been waged on Mars for all its impact on the convention. It was barely discussed, and its implications were conscientiously avoided. No real solution on the basis of principles was achieved on even a single question. The corroding conflicts of the factions remain both in policy and personnel of the new National Executive Committee. This N.E.C. gives the allies of the Trotskyists decidedly greater influence than before, though no outspoken Trotskyist gained a seat.

This tentative assessment, based on the published resolutions, may be vitally altered when the whole story of the convention emerges. Meanwhile, much depends on who is appointed to the various committees and the editorial board of the *Socialist Call*. The Trotskyists will not cease their wrecking activities. So long as they are met with compromise, so long will sterility haunt the Socialist Party.

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REVIEW AND COMMENT

Anna Louise Strong on Spain and Boudin on the Supreme Court—A Silone novel and an escapade in escapology

ANNA LOUISE STRONG flew into Spain last December on the plane which also carried the distinguished biologist, J. B. S. Haldane and Senator Branting of Sweden. The former was going to Spain to place his knowledge of the chemistry and physiology of poison gases at the disposal of the Loyalist Government; the latter to gather material for a report to the World Committee Against War and Fascism.

They landed at Alicante and Miss Strong was immediately struck, as is everyone who now enters Spain, with the happy friendliness of the people. "Is this just Spanish," she asked Senator Branting, "or is it the revolution?" "Both," he replied. "They were always a frank, hospitable people. But now there is undoubtedly an additional sense of liberation, a feeling of their own united power."

She went almost immediately to Valencia, the seat of the Popular Front Government, transformed, energized, teeming with a doubled population, seething with activity, especially at night, when all work is done behind closely shaded and shuttered windows. "Valencia is not yet war," Miss Strong says, "it is roaring energy of a people who mobilize and organize war."

There she met Del Vayo, "the most American person I met in Spain," and "La Pasionaria," the Communist Deputy from the Asturias who, "by gesture and tone diffuses around her an atmosphere of deeply concerned love for plain, ordinary people." Also, she met the chief of the Fine Arts section in the Ministry of Education, who told her of the removal of the great pictures from the Prado in Madrid and their storage in the huge towers at the gates of Valencia, so strong that even "half-ton bombs cannot penetrate them."

She met many other officials, and discussed with them the problems of the popular front government—the roles of the Communists, the Socialists, Anarchists, Catalonian nationalists and so forth. These conversations* are replete with illuminating comments on the international situation, the so-called atrocities, the church, and the future of Spain after the defeat of Franco.

Her chapters on Madrid are realistic and moving. She recounts the heroic defense of that critical first week of November, the arrival of the International Brigade, the organization of the Lister Battalion, the achievement of a unified command. She conveys with considerable reportorial skill the enormous accomplishments of creating an army, organizing the provisioning of it, establishing a new government, effecting social reforms—all simultaneously.

The same sense of profound change and astonishing accomplishment is conveyed in her passages on Barcelona and the problems of Catalonia, the industrial part of Spain. There the Communist and Socialist parties have united, and the unification of the two great labor unions, the Anarchist C. N. T. and the Marxist U. G. T., is a definite possibility. She says, "Step by step . . . a wider base of social control will grow beyond the factory, beyond industry, beyond even Catalonia and any leaders who hold out against this great need of the people for unity and discipline will be thrust aside by their own followers." Will this unity be perfected in time to thwart international fascism? she asked. "There is no power in Europe strong enough to turn the clock back now in Catalonia," she was answered.

HENRY HART.

* SPAIN IN ARMS, 1937, *by Anna Louise Strong. Henry Holt & Co.* $1; *paper* 25c.

After "Fontamara"

BREAD AND WINE, *by Ignazio Silone. Harper & Brothers.* $2.50.

SILONE has strayed a long way into mysticism, but he is still an anti-fascist writer, and as such he has a literary method and spirit unique among anti-fascist writers. Who else can play so fast and loose with the dictatorships, can first vex and worry their absurdities and then, with a sudden twist, pounce, as it were, and break their backs? *Bread and Wine* has all this furious burlesque quality, all the broad stylization, the astounding richness of character and incident which made *Fontamara* a great novel. And as an indictment of Italian fascism it goes farther still. The economic suffering of the peasantry and proletariat, which *Fontamara* so effectively dramatized, is one thing; the spiritual misery of the clerical and professional classes is another. *Bread and Wine* exhibits both. It shows how a prolonged dictatorship eats into the soul, destroys intelligence and confounds values, makes schoolteachers into official mouthpieces, turns priests into revolutionaries and revolutionaries into priests.

Woodcut by Morado

If I am not mistaken (and this is not at all an easy book to interpret), this sinister transformation of individuals under fascism is one of the main themes of *Bread and Wine,* a theme which distinguishes it pretty sharply from the earlier novel. In *Fontamara,* to be sure, we saw the transformation of Berardo from a utopian rebel, a kind of rural Wobbly, into a revolutionary. But this psychological interest was incidental, I think, to a tale of collective effort, which had its beginning and end in the struggle and destruction of the Fontamarans. In *Bread and Wine,* on the other hand, the central fact seems to be, not action, although there is plenty of it, but consciousness: the minds of two men, Pietro Spina, revolutionary, and Don Benedetto, priest.

Of this pair of complementary characters, Spina is the more prominent. In his name (which means thorn), in the priest's robe which he wears as a disguise, in a whole set of symbols and associations, Spina's idealist and mystical tendencies are implied from the start. Impatient with exile, tired of theory divorced from action, he returns to Italy to work secretly among the peasants. When someone reproaches him for not following the example of the great leaders who worked patiently in exile and waited for their hour, he admits that he is wrong: he confesses to being a "bad revolutionary." And, as the frustrations that lie in store for him prove, it is a fact. With his disguise, his artificially aged face, his gestures, his impatiences, his susceptibilities, he manages in spite of his courage to create an impression of futility and almost of melodrama. Working now among the peasants, now among the Roman proletariat, first with propaganda, then with acts of violence, he tries to build an underground group; tries and fails, for the peasants have already been stifled with fascist propaganda and the workers, their cells constantly broken by the police, are nearly paralyzed with caution.

Finally, dismayed by the sordid ceremony which surrounds the announcement of the Ethiopian campaign, the voice of the Dictator coming through the public radio, the solemn credulity of the crowd, the ritual cries of *Chay Doo! Chay Doo!,* Spina goes at night to the church steps and there chalks "Down with the government soup!" For this, his one real venture into action, someone else is arrested. Fascism has now begun to lose its historical character for this demoralized revolutionist; it begins to appear as a kind of time-

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less evil, "deeper than politics" (as the priest, Don Benedetto, puts it). "It is a canker. You cannot heal a putrefying corpse with warm poultices. There is the class struggle, the town and the country, but underlying all these things there is man, a poor, weak, terrified animal. The canker has penetrated to his marrow." To this priest, who, through progressive disillusionment with the Church, has come close to a revolutionary position, Spina turns in his despair. And now, figuratively speaking, the two change roles. Poisoned by the authorities, Don Benedetto dies like a political conspirator, while Spina in the last scene climbs toward a Calvary in the Apennines.

Thus *Bread and Wine,* in spite of its historic setting, is in its essence a philosophical novel, centering on the clash of the Christian idea with the idea of revolutionary materialism. In the end the two are represented as fusing to form a new revolutionary concept with its own peculiar program. Such a concept finds, of course, no justification in Marxism or in history. And insofar as Silone himself accepts it (and there seems little doubt that he does, that it represents his own attempt at a solution) he must be reckoned for the present among the casualties of intellectual despair. His novel, meanwhile, is a powerful record of his confusions.

F. W. DUPEE.

Empire Revisited

AWAY FROM IT ALL, *by Cedric Belfrage. Simon & Schuster.* $3.

IT IS one of England's deadliest literary customs for bright young men to travel through the empire and write books about it. They generally discover that the empire is great and glorious, that the sun never sets on it, and that the British are a superior race, forging civilization in backward areas out of sheer benignity. To anyone familiar with this state of affairs, Cedric Belfrage's book is a blessed relief, and, moreover, a turning point. He is one of the few young Englishmen who have visited and written about empire without seeming to loll in Rudyard Kipling's lap. Above all, Belfrage writes not only with real insight but delightful wit.

In England, Belfrage had been trained in escapology, an art highly cultivated in capitalist countries to keep people from peeping over economic barriers and discovering the results of the profit system. Belfrage began to find that escapology wasn't fooling him a bit, so he took the last desperate step and followed the conventional away-from-it-all impulse, only to find that this didn't work either. Wherever the profit system had been established, exploitation and human misery prevailed. His countrymen were carrying the white man's burden with a snobbish complacency and a sense of martyrdom, because the loot was so heavy to carry away. India, the brightest jewel in Britain's crown, was full of "red-faced beasts" who kept a foot on the neck of a degraded native population and fawned on native potentates. The Persian

Joseph Serrano

"If the 'Worker' would only pan it, maybe the 'Times' would give us a break!"

Gulf coast was a private oil pool maintained by the simple device of encouraging native chiefs to kill each other while Britain pumped the oil. Belfrage did not confine himself to England's feeding grounds; wherever the profit system had touched, he found the same conditions. In Palestine, Zionists enjoyed an artificial capitalist boom at the expense of an exploited Arab working class. In the South Seas, the tropical glamor of travel folders existed side by side with disease, exploitation, and race slaughter. The only hopeful signs he found were the essential health of the working classes and an increasing awareness of their condition. By the time he had got back from his junket, he realized that he had to get both feet over the fence and stand with them.

Belfrage's ironic wit burns up with ridicule the false pretenses of empire and the spurious idea of romantic adventure which imperialism has fostered. He casts himself as the hero of an unromantic exploit. Having convinced himself that romance in the tropics is bunk and that the results of imperialism are appalling, he wishes the trip were over when he still has half the world to cover. Occasionally, his justifiable indignation seems to turn in on itself; his wit becomes facetious; there seems to be no point in continuing the adventure; he exposes the fallacy of "escapology" early in his journey, but he still has to ride his idea back home. Nevertheless, he is a good traveler, his eyes are wide open, and he is doggedly persistent about seeing it through to the end. So the result is something unique in travel books. It's a telling satire on "escapology," a revealing account of one man's escape from it, a twentieth century Childe Harold replete with wisdom, irony, and jest.

STEPHEN PATERSON.

Boudin on the Court

SCIENCE & SOCIETY: A MARXIAN QUARTERLY. *Spring issue, 1937.* 35 cents.

MOST timely in the current issue of *Science & Society*—which Harold Laski justly describes as the best Marxist journal in the English language—is a long study on the Supreme Court and Civil Rights by Louis B. Boudin, distinguished both as a lawyer and as a Marxist scholar.

What is most significant in this article is that Boudin is not making a stock contrast between law and actuality, between what the Constitution provides and what the courts practice. Instead, he is making a purely legal analysis, showing that the law makes none of the provisions which liberals think it does. His reasoning is impressive; his exposition contains highly illuminating cases and decisions. Justice itself, Mr. Boudin shows, is not a federal right, and the doing of justice is neither a constitutional guarantee nor a Supreme Court function. The fourteenth amendment, under which many civil liberty cases are argued, does not protect citizens against the abridgment of those privileges and immunities which the layman imagines inhere in civil rights. Such is the law as interpreted and established by the Supreme Court.

Mr. Boudin shows that the Supreme Court has ruled that trial by jury is not a requirement of due process of law and is therefore not protected by the United States Constitution against abridgment or abolition of the states. Similarly, freedom of assemblage is not a right protected against infringement by the states. Nor does the federal constitution guarantee against discrimination, against racial and religious minorities; as interpreted by the Supreme Court it offers no protection against the kind of "racial purity" laws typical of Nazi Germany. According to the Supreme Court, our states may punish marriage between members of different races—actually a criminal offense in many states.

Dealing specifically with civil rights, Boudin points out that, as traditionally understood, freedom of speech and press meant that no one would be imprisoned or otherwise molested for merely speaking or writing, so long as he himself refrained from doing anything illegal and no one else was actually influenced by the speech or writing to do anything illegal. But Supreme Court decisions have abridged the civil rights of those who teach or advocate revolutionary doctrines with respect to the social or economic order, ***even though neither they nor their adherents follow up their teaching or advocacy by any action whatever.*** The Supreme Court has never declared that any criminal anarchy or criminal syndicalism law is unconstitutional. The Court has repeatedly sustained convictions under these laws even when no illegal act was involved; it has on rare occasions reversed particularly stupid state court decisions based on these laws, but the criminal syndicalism statutes themselves have never been touched. The recent DeJonge ruling, hailed by liberals as a victory for civil

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rights, was merely the reversal of a state court decision, but the vicious law under which DeJonge was convicted is still effective in the state of Oregon, and under its operation it is a crime merely to be a Communist, even if you do nothing, even if you refrain from preaching Communism. Behind this are a series of Supreme Court decisions in which the liberal justices often concurred.

Boudin shows that the Supreme Court has repeatedly exercised legislative as well as judicial powers; it has diminished our civil rights by giving the Constitution a narrow interpretation, often flying in the face of established principles and the clear language of the document; it has deprived those civil rights which it has left us of any real content by depriving the federal government of its power to protect them. The article stops with this purely analytical conclusion, but Boudin's argument is so cogent that it needs no great effort to reach the inescapable practical conclusions from the facts—and the author himself admits that he is an ardent "curber" of the Court.

Other articles in the current issue of *Science & Society* are Paul Radin's analysis of the economic factors in primitive religion; Carl Schmidt's study of agricultural enterprise and property under Italian fascism; and James S. Allen's of the struggle for land during the Reconstruction period in the U.S.A.

WARD THOMPSON.

Descent to Hell

THE CASE OF THE ANTI-SOVIET TROTSKYITE CENTER: A VERBATIM REPORT, *published by the People's Commissariat of Justice of the U.S.S.R. Bookniga.* $1.

TO summarize the contents of this official report of the recent Moscow trials issued by the Commissariat of Justice of the U.S.S.R., is a task that would baffle any reviewer. One fingers the pages with the knowledge that they are being read by thousands, that the lessons of this record will be the subject of many interpretations in time to come. This reviewer must perforce limit himself to the following facets of the subject: was the trial conducted, and the defendants' guilt proved, according to accepted legal norms; and was the conspiracy that was revealed without precedent in history?

A distinguishing feature of the European Continental criminal procedure, substantially followed in the Soviet Union, is the "preliminary investigation." This inquiry by the state precedes the public hearing or trial, and is an objective examination into the charges, without the hindrance of technical objections and exceptions which encumber our criminal trials. After the preliminary inquiry by an examining magistrate, the record is sent to the public prosecutor, who continues the inquiry, summoning the accused and witnesses again before him. Records are made of all preliminary investigations. These exhaustive probes exclude elements of gamble or contest, and constitute a scientific investigation of the case. Both the state and the accused now know every provable factor of the alleged crime. The possibility of surprise is thus eliminated from the procedure. Upon the record so made, the indictment may or may not be issued by the prosecuting attorney.

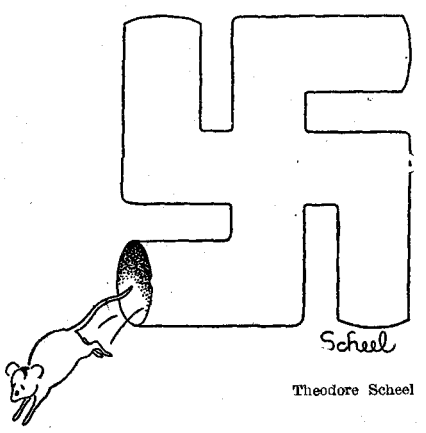
The public trial or hearing which follows is therefore of different character from an ordinary criminal trial in courts following the tradition of Anglo-Saxon jurisprudence. By the time the accused is called for the public trial, he already knows all the evidence against him. It is, then, not surprising that confessions occur at the Continental public hearings more frequently than at our trials, where the evidence against the prisoner is developed piecemeal and comes to his attention for the first time. If the preliminary investigations are conducted in an arbitrary way, prejudicial to the accused, if confessions are forced, if false evidence is adduced, then the accused and his attorney have, at the open trial, the opportunity to challenge the prosecution.

Pyatakov, Radek, and the others faced an open court. Radek saw in the audience foreign journalists and diplomats, many of whom he had personally known for years. Here was his opportunity, and that of Pyatakov and the rest, to challenge and prove, if they could, that the prosecution was a frame-up. What, under these circumstances, did Radek do?

> When I found myself [Radek declared], in the People's Commissariat of Internal Affairs, the chief examining official realized at once why I would not talk. He said to me: "You are not a baby. Here you have fifteen people testifying against you. You cannot get out of it, and as a sensible man you cannot think of doing so. If you do not want to testify it can only be because you want to gain time and look it over more closely. Very well, study it." For two and a half months I tormented the examining official. The question has been raised here whether we were tormented while under investigation. I must say that it was not I who was tormented, but I who tormented the examining officials and compelled them to perform a lot of useless work. For two and a half months I compelled the examining official, by interrogating me and by confronting me with the testimony of other accused, to open up all the cards to me, so that I could see who had confessed, who had not confessed, and what each had confessed. . . .

And Pyatakov:

> I am not going to say, Citizen Judges—for it would be ridiculous to speak about this here—that of course no measures of repression or suasion have been employed in regard to me. Indeed such measures, for me personally at any rate, could not have served as a motive for making statements.
>
> It is not fear that has been my motive for recounting my crimes. What can be worse than the very consciousness and confession of all these crimes—the most grievous and noxious crime, which it fell to my lot to commit?



Theodore Scheel

These confessions must be viewed against the background of the records in the hands not only of the public prosecutor, but of the defendants as well. The records of the preliminary investigation, painstakingly and laboriously gathered and fitted together, are the blueprints of the conspiracy. The defendants could do nothing at the public trial to minimize those records, and the prosecutor was not interested in exaggerating. Despite, however, the complete disclosure of the crimes, the examinations of the accused in the preliminary investigations, and their desire to confess, it is not to be supposed that passages of heat did not develop either at the preliminary investigations or during the trial. For instance:

VYSHINSKY (*to Radek*): And then you were arrested?

RADEK: I was arrested, but I denied everything from beginning to end. Maybe you will ask me why?

VYSHINSKY: I know that you will always find an answer. You were arrested and questioned. You gave answers?

RADEK: I denied everything from beginning to end.

VYSHINSKY: You knew everything, you had the opportunity to go and tell everything?

RADEK: I had, but I decided that I would do that in the People's Commissariat of Internal Affairs...

VYSHINSKY: Comrade President, will you please ask the accused to answer questions and not to make speeches?

PRESIDENT: Accused Radek, you may make your two speeches: one—your speech in defense, and the other—your last plea.

VYSHINSKY: I do not propose to engage in a shouting match with accused Radek. I am interrogating you, putting questions to you. Answer the questions, if you please, and do not make speeches. I would ask you not to try to shout me down and not to speak on questions that have nothing to do with the case.

Nor, when examined in its historical context, do the trial and the psychological motivation for the confessions appear strange. The "inescapable logic" of Trotsky's theory of permanent revolution could lead, in the present international situation, to no other end than an alliance with fascism. The two leading defendants, Pyatakov and Radek, make that quite clear. Says Radek:

> And therefore the conclusion: restoration of capitalism in the circumstances of 1935. For nothing at all, just for the sake of Trotsky's beautiful eyes—the country was to return to capitalism. When I read this I felt as if it were a madhouse. And, lastly, and this is no unimportant fact, formerly the position was that we were fighting for power because we were convinced that we could secure something to the country. Now we were to fight in order that foreign capital might rule, which would put us completely under its control before it allowed us to come to power. What did the directive to agree upon wrecking activities with foreign circles mean? For me this directive meant something very simple, something very comprehensive to me as a political organizer: namely, that agents of foreign powers were becoming wedged in our organization, that our organization was becoming the direct representa-

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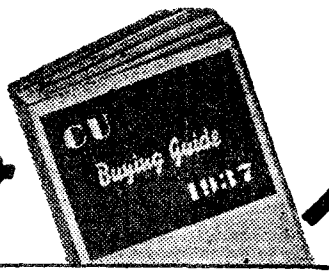

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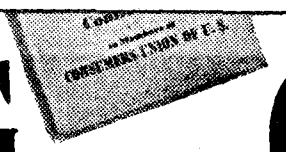

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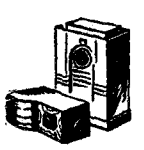

Supplementing a report in the November issue on lower-priced radios, this report rates more than ten popular models ranging in price from $60 to $200. Coming issues will contain reports on automobile radios.

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tive of foreign intelligence services. We ceased to be in the slightest degree the masters of our actions. We had put up with Trotsky when he gave us directives from abroad, but in this case we were to become the agency of foreign fascist states.

But the accused were not convicted on their confessions alone. There were, in addition, incriminating correspondence and other corroborative data. Prosecutor Vyshinsky very ably characterized the nature and scope of available proof when he said in his summing-up:

> You say that there is an organization, that there is some sort of a gang (they call themselves a party), but where are their decisions, where is the material evidence of their conspiratorial activities — rules, minutes, a seal, and so on and so forth?
>
> I am bold enough to assert, in keeping with the fundamental requirements of the science of criminal procedure, that in cases of conspiracy such demands cannot be put. You cannot demand that cases of conspiracy, of *coup d'état*, be approached from the standpoint: give us minutes, decisions, membership cards, the numbers of your membership cards; you cannot demand that conspirators have their conspiratorial activities certified by a notary. No sensible man can put the question in this way in cases of state conspiracy. In fact we have a number of documents to prove our case. But even if these documents were not available, we would still consider it right to submit our indictment on the basis of the testimony and evidence of the accused and witnesses and, if you will, circumstantial evidence. . . .

None but the blindest partisan could demand more of the organs of a state protecting itself against conspiracy.

Examined in the historic and political sense, the Trotskyite conspiracy crystallizes from probability to positivity. The accused, in their testimony, make that transition quite clear. Beginning with a political deviation from the party line, they show how they were gripped in what they call "the logic of the struggle" and how, step by step, they were led into counter-revolutionary crime and treason. The master mind of this intrigue, Trotsky, claims to be a historian; and it is amazing to note how woefully he has misread history. From time immemorial, whenever a political dissident has lost contact with the masses and the possibility of rallying their support, so that he cannot legitimately prevail, he will resort to what Trotsky, in his writings, calls a "palace revolution." It is such a "palace revolution," without mass basis, that Trotsky has been attempting in the Soviet Union. A "palace revolution" is a polite name for assassination through cliques of adventurers, or what Vyshinsky states it to be:

> This gang of murderers, incendiaries, and bandits can only be compared with the medieval *cámorra* which united the Italian nobility, vagabonds and brigands.

CHARLES RECHT.

Brief Reviews

ANNA BECKER, *by Max White. Stackpole Sons.* $2.50.

This well-written novel depicts the physical awakening of a woman of German-American heritage and New England education. The man who brings about the awakening is a Swedish quarry-worker. The basic contrast upon which the book is constructed is that between the "primitive" directness of the worker and the false gentility of the lady, and its climax is in the complete triumph of the former over the latter. The setting, which has been carefully studied and competently drawn, is a New Hampshire college and quarry town, and by and large, the truths of this community have been pointed out. The truths about the quarry are only treated at a great distance, however; the action is all laid in the environs of the college and in the rooming-place of the worker.

However, the force embodied in the worker is presented as an almost completely *blind* force. The emotional freedom and purity of the working class is not really due to any "primitiveness," but to the fact that economic necessity wears away those things which, in the bourgeois personality, become shackles of hypocrisy and impurities of motive. What is good in the worker is really a newer thing than what is bad in the lady. The author does not bring this out; indeed, he confuses the issue by over-emphasizing the "strong silence" of the worker, his dumbness, his unconsciousness. His power over the woman is not linked adequately with the rest of his life, with his work and its relationships. R. G.

NONE SHALL LOOK BACK, *by Caroline Gordon. Charles Scribner's Sons.* $2.75.

Notwithstanding that it is a better book than its immediate predecessor, the reactionary *Gone with the Wind,* Miss Gordon's is not a good novel by any means. Reader and, apparently, author are unable to decide what it is about: the Allard family, General Nathan Bedford Forrest, or the fate of the "old South." It is about all three, but only one at a time, and therefore it is choppy, discontinuous, and inorganic. Miss Gordon gives us broad and varied scenes, but there is no broad interpretation of them, and they have no direction. On one hand, there is the domestic life of the Allards, their loves and losses; on the other, the battlefields and General Forrest; but there seems to be no connection between them except fortuitous geographical and chronological ones. History here is a series of pictures; there is no dynamic movement to it, no purpose. If, in the midst of one of Miss Gordon's well-written battle scenes, you stopped to ask, What does this mean, where is it leading? the only answer would be that Lucy's husband is killed, and Lucy grieves; that General Forrest leads a hopeless charge on the enemy with desperate courage; that the gentle Allardses' pride suffers. History is a nostalgic backward look at a group of scenes. The novel lacks artistic form largely because it lacks a coherent meaning. It approaches a broad, historical scene as if only the emotions of certain individuals mattered; we are left contemplating merely those, and they do not seem important. D. B. E.

★

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Forward from Liberalism, by Stephen Spender. Random House. $2.
Let Me Live, by Angelo Herndon. Random House. March Book Union Selection. $2.50.
The Old Bunch, by Meyer Levin. Viking. $2.
The Boys in the Back Room, by Jules Romains. Translated from the French by Jacques Le Clercq. McBride. $2.
Something of Myself, by Rudyard Kipling, Doubleday, Doran. $2.50.
Changing Man: The Education System of the U.S.S.R., by Beatrice King. Viking $2.75.
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SIGHTS AND SOUNDS

Two plays about two kinds of war—Some extra-curricular film doings—Books on music

VIRTUOSITY and virtue again go separate ways in the theater offerings of the week. There is small virtue in *Young Madame Conti,* Bruno Frank's play about a beautiful and honest young prostitute and her *crime passionnel,* and yet the virtuosity of Constance Cummings's performance and the verbal talents of the play's adapters, Hubert Griffith and Benn W. Levy, go far toward making it worth seeing. Miss Cummings furrows her smooth brow and tosses her red-gold locks with great effect in a piece of bravura acting that must be grueling in its demands upon her. But don't get the idea that her style is all *Sturm und Drang;* her quiet moments are there too, and just as effective. There seems little doubt that she is now in the top flight of our dramatic actresses. There is no doubt at all that it is she who gives life to this dramatic *tour de force,* which employs for its major effect one of those tricks which enrage some playgoers and delight others. Mr. Levy's direction, of course, is smooth and precise, and shares the laurels for virtuosity.

The virtue of the raw stuff of life infuses the rambling *Red Harvest,* a play based on "pages from a Red Cross diary" kept in a war hospital behind the Chateau Thierry push, and makes it, in spite of certain silly surrenders to traditional theater, something worth seeing. It is a disappointment to hopes, rather than to expectations, that the political insight of the script does not reach the level made possible by its facts, and yet we are somewhat rewarded by the fact that the war-time President of the United States, the members of Congress, and kings and their cabinets the world over are pointedly addressed as sons of bitches by a nurse who has begun to see through the whole lousy racket. The Frederic Tozere whose portrayal of Pharaoh brightened the scenes of the W.P.A.'s production of *The Sun and I* when it opened, does a good job in the male lead of *Red Harvest* as a snotty, lecherous surgeon who turns out to have a heart of gold. Leona Powers, head nurse in the hospital, is the chief character, and manages to convey without offensive theatricality the terrific stress of hospital work within sound of the drumfire and under appalling conditions of overcrowding, understaffing, shortage of equipment, and the human breakdown that such conditions produce. The outbreak of almost sheer animal protest against these conditions and against the constant stream of dead and dying humanity is handled by Margaret Mullen, who for once in a way managed to make stage hysterics something deeply terrifying. Antoinette Perry's control of pace, moreover, finally brought into vigorous motion a play that started out twiddling its thumbs with overacting and flat talk.

Another play dealing with the stress of war is Michael Blankfort's *The Brave and the Blind,* put on by the Rebel Arts Players at the Labor Stage Studios in New York. It takes us into the fascist-held Alcazar on the fiftieth day of the siege by the Spanish loyalists, and shows us a cross-section of the population under conditions of fascist rule and anti-fascist beleaguerment. The folks in the room of the old fortress are there at the behest of the fascist-military clique who have told them that the "Reds" will strip them of land, property, religion, and other things they hold dear. As the play progresses, with the loyalists' mining operations plainly audible, it becomes clear to the besieged that the thing they hold dearest is life, and when at last the loyalist loudspeaker tells them they have five minutes to surrender or be blown to bits, their choice is clear despite their political views or misapprehensions. It is at this point that the fascists clear up a lot of their followers' political confusions by a wholesale execution of those in the room, including fascist sympathizers. The execution of a priest by the fascists for trying to fulfill his priestly duty of administering extreme unction to a Catholic loyalist prisoner also has its political effect on those besieged in the Alcazar. This play is especially valuable in showing the patterns of human reaction among the population behind the fascist lines in Spain, and how through trickery, force, and, finally, wanton desperation, the fascist leadership attempts to maintain its rule. The continuing sound of the loyalists' mining operations and the final loudspeaker are historic facts which are effectively used as dramatic material. At this writing, the Rebel Arts group was uncertain whether further performances would be shown, but readers in New York can phone them to find out. It is to be hoped that this play will go the rounds under the auspices of trade unions that are supporting the cause of Spanish democracy.

Taking a merited cue from its audiences, *Farewell, Summer* closed after a week's run. Miss Lois Wilson's talents were incapable of lending life to this embarrassing still-birth about a girl who fell fruitlessly in love with a scientist who was satisfied with his wife.

ALEXANDER TAYLOR.

Helen Ludwig

"Can you beat it? He called me a scissor-bill!"

THE SCREEN

FIRST let us take a look at the films of the week, and then turn to some other interesting phases of the film world.

Elephant Boy (London Films-United Artists): Based on Kipling's *Toomai of the Elephants,* this is the product of John Collier (scenario), Alexander Korda (producer), and Zolton Korda as co-director with Robert Flaherty. At the mention of the last name we think of an important figure in the development of documentary film and of something "higher" than the usual synthetic Hollywood product. Compared with *Elephant Boy,* Flaherty's *Man of Aran* was a sensitive and honest film. The former smacks entirely (in spite of a sprinkling of academic landscape cinematography) of class-B London production, with "Oxford in the jungle" and a goodly share of British imperialism and chauvinism. The story is simple enough, being only about a little boy who wants to become a great hunter. But it is the British attitude toward "natives" that makes this film what it is. It is evident either that it is mainly Zoltan Korda's work (for it resembles his *Sanders of the River*), or that Robert Flaherty lost his artistic integrity in the Indian jungle. I'd like to believe the former.

Maytime (M.G.M.): An operetta; entertainment galore if you like Jeanette MacDonald and Nelson Eddy; a potpourri of Tschaikowski's Fifth Symphony, Sigmund Romberg's *Maytime,* Meyerbeer's *Huguenots,* Tin Pan Alley's "Virginia Ham and Eggs," "Santa Lucia," and some folk music à la "Carry Me Back to Old Virginny."

Now to other matters. An important development is the formation of the Associated Film Audiences and the publication of their first bulletin, *Film Survey.* It is encouraging to see that finally there will be an attempt to do one of the most important jobs in the interest of pro-labor, anti-war, and generally progressive films of all types: the job of *organizing the audience.* The Associated Film Audiences is a body composed (so far) of the American Jewish Congress, American League Against War and Fascism, American Youth Congress, Federal Council of Churches of Christ in America, Teachers' Union Local 5, International Ladies' Garment Workers'

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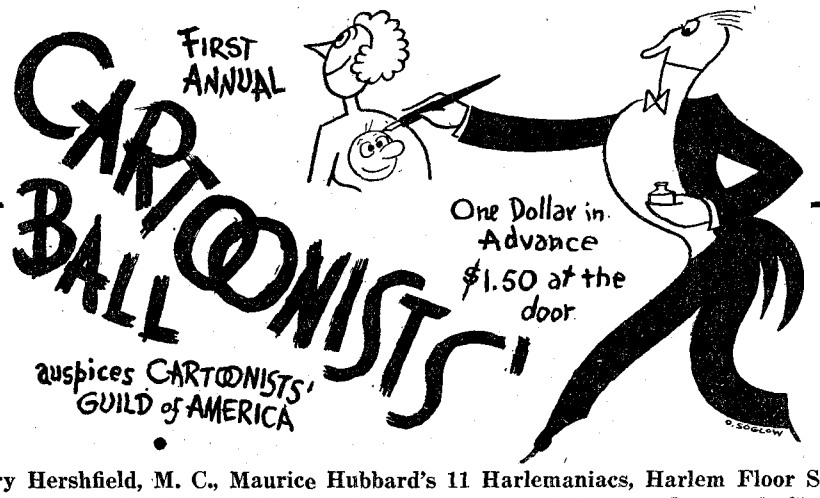

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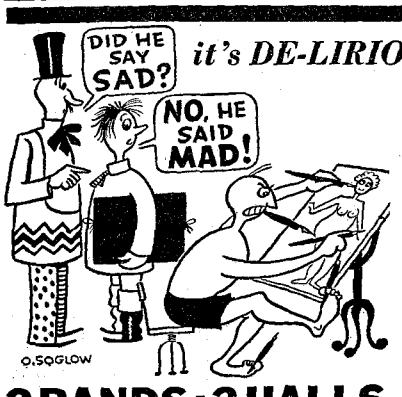

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You might have got the idea that the ivory-tower notion of the artist's and writer's function was not being argued publicly these days with any conviction, but it seems that it has broken out in Hollywood with a bang. The March issue of the *Screen Guild Magazine* carries an article by Donald Ogden Stewart, outstanding American humorist and one of the top-rank screen writers in Hollywood, which is a vigorous reply to an article by Mary McCall, Jr., in the February issue of the same magazine. Miss McCall had complained bitterly, speaking of the actors, writers, and directors in the screen colony, that "We're up to our necks in politics and morality just now. Nobody goes to anybody's house any more to sit and talk and have fun. There's a master of ceremonies and a collection basket, because there are no good gatherings now except for a Good Cause." What got Miss McCall's goat, among other things, was that Mr. Stewart was assigned by the Screen Writers' Guild (of which he is an executive board member) to attend a mass meeting at which Ralph Bates spoke in behalf of the Spanish government. In expounding her position, she quoted William Butler Yeats to the effect that "art knows no politics, art knows no morality," and remarked that there would some day be a showdown between the Right and the Left in which the Rights would "tar, feather, and mutilate the staff of some Liberal newspaper," and in which the Lefts would "go beserk and sack the Metropolitan Museum." As a writer, she remarked, her job would not be to take part in such a conflict, but to view it from the sidelines and report it.

Replying, Mr. Stewart remarked that Miss McCall could say, if she liked, that non-participation was the writer's role, but pointed to the facts of life to prove her wrong. He mentioned the part Ralph Bates, Ralph Fox, André Malraux, and other writers had played, and were playing in the Spanish situation, and reminded her of the great tradition of writers' fighting for freedom in which Byron, Shelley, Thomas Moore, Voltaire, and others had played a part. "The example of these men," Mr. Stewart remarked, "would seem to give some small excuse at least for a Hollywood writer to interest himself in what is going on

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in Spain or permit him to attend an anti-Nazi meeting without fearing that he is betraying the artistic demands of his contract. . . ."

PETER ELLIS.

CONCERT MUSIC

PARSIFAL (Act III on the New York Philharmonic-Symphony's March 28 program in toto at the Metropolitan Opera House) held no temptation to break a welcome Easter vacation from concert-going; neither did the New York Women's Symphony March 30 presentation of Horatio Parker's frequently praised and rarely performed *Hora Novissima.* I weakened momentarily to the extent of tuning in on the ever-admirable WQXR (New York) for the latter work, but the best broadcasting in the world can't make a rankly incompetent performance any more palatable, and in any case a Puritan sneaking in his operatic exhibitionism under the cover of a churchly text was offensive enough in itself. So, while waiting to hear the sonorously fanfared Symphony by Samuel Barber, and Ernest Bloch's new *Voice in the Wilderness* (scheduled by the Philharmonic-Symphony for April 3 and 4, a couple of days too late for reporting in this issue), I found a not too impertinent subject for these notes in an uncommonly substantial book on music.

B. H. Haggin's *A Book of the Symphony* (Oxford University Press, $5) is not to be confused with Charles O'Connell's *The Victor Book of the Symphony,* published by Simon & Schuster a couple of years ago. The latter work is essentially a collection of program notes on the standard symphonic repertory, seeking, in the author's words, to "stimulate the reader's own emotional and imaginative responses to music." Haggin sets out on sounder ground with a text that bears quoting:

> A statement about music will mean nothing to a person who reads it unless he has heard the music or can hear it when he reads the statement. . . . To understand what a phrase of music conveys he needs only to hear it; and there is, in fact, no other way: the meaning of the phrase consists in subtleties of feeling for which there are no words, and which are conveyed through music precisely because they cannot be conveyed in any other way. . . . What Mozart has to say, then, only he can say for himself (and one must doubt that he intended or would accept the interpretations of some who undertake to speak for him).

It is not the single phrase which causes any difficulty to the person who has not studied music (he has only to hear it), but the "aggregate, the succession of phrases that gives him trouble." Unlike pictures, for example, which can be studied in their entirety merely by standing and looking at them, a symphony exists in the dimension of time: "For the untrained listener there are too many details that succeed each other too rapidly; so that his ear misses some of them, and in the end he is left with an impression of a number of unconnected, unorganized fragments." Haggin's ideal solution to this old problem is the tonally illustrated lecture; his substitute in the present book is to key his discussion of the details of a work to illustrations in music notation plus

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(for the benefit of the many who are wholly or partly musically illiterate) exact cues to *sounded* illustrations in recorded performances. It is properly to be used as a handbook to phonograph records of the works with which it deals, and for that purpose it is accompanied by an ingenious measuring device (similar to those lately popular among British "discophiles") which enables one to locate and play the particular passages quoted and written about.

The dual approach—by eye and ear—has long been recognized as the best; Haggin's application of it is both novel and practicable. Except for some excellent introductory material on musical form in general, brief chapters on the make-up of an orchestra, the phonograph and phonograph needles, and succinct notes on the individual symphonies and their composers (Mozart, Haydn, Beethoven, Schubert, Brahms, Tchaikovsky, Franck), the book consists principally of page after page of illustrated analysis invariably cued to one or more recorded performances.

The general lay musical public seems to have an insatiable appetite for education, and devours Gargantuan doses of so-called appreciation material. Those of it who want their education predigested and well saccharined, who mistake a wind-swollen belly for a solid meal, will gag at Haggin's honest roast beef, but those who sincerely want nourishment and who aren't afraid of some tough chewing will find *A Book of the Symphony* their meat.

Yet with all the concise and remarkably accurate information it contains, its pithy true talk, and painstaking fulfillment of its objectives, the book leaves me admiringly respectful, but unsatisfied. Its intricately detailed tonal blueprints do not lead as directly as the author may imagine to a concept of the whole tonal architecture of a work. The linear elements are given first-rate exposition, but they provide little clue to the spatial and coloristic characteristics that are scarcely less significant. Complete knowledge of a musical work calls for reading the full score while hearing the tonal web itself. Haggin's work is most important as a convenient stepping-stone to score reading, and through its use untrained listeners may easily acquire that faculty; but there is no reference I can find to this function, nor to the fact that score reading is much less difficult than the layman supposes. I can warmly commend Haggin's work to anyone seeking to enlarge his musical knowledge, but in doing so I should not neglect to supply the missing emphasis that it is fundamentally a primer and that the next step is the study of pocket scores, many of which have similar analytic annotations and which in addition give a full working model of the tonal structure as opposed to Mr. Haggin's blueprints.

Nevertheless, this is a good elementary work,

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DISCUSSION

CHARLES RECHT speaks on: "THE SOVIET UNION AND THE NEW CONSTITUTION" on Sunday eve., April 11th, 8:30 p.m., at 119 W. 57th St., Studio 615.

and it would be perhaps unfair to demand further that it illuminate as well as elucidate. It is a rare technical study that can match the artistic integrity of this one and go on to fire one's imagination and stretch one's sensibilities to an undreamed of pitch of acuteness. I know of one, and, while praising Haggin's valuable *Book of the Symphony,* cannot forbear to pay new tribute to the incomparable *Contrapuntal Technique in the Sixteenth Century* by R. O. Morris. But Morris doesn't deal with the symphonies of Beethoven, Brahms, *et al,* and if not many will be willing to chew over Haggin's analyses, there are still fewer who ever have come to grips with the most truly exciting book on music I know about.

R. D. DARRELL.

★

Forthcoming Broadcasts

(Times given are Eastern Standard, but all programs listed are on coast-to-coast hookups)

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Thomas Mann. Tues. Apr. 13, 7:45 p.m. N.B.C. blue.

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PLAYS

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Candida (Empire, N. Y.). Revival of Shaw's domestic-relations comedy, with Katharine Cornell.

Storm Over Patsy (Guild, N. Y.). James Bridie's adaptation of Bruno Frank's pleasant comedy about a dog who precipitated a domestic-relations and political crisis.

Helen Howe. Monodramas in social satire, on tour: Apr. 12, San Mateo Jr. College, San Mateo, Cal.; Apr. 21, College Club, Portland, Me.; Apr. 23, Watertown, Mass.; May 1, E. Northfield, Mass.

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